

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA CHRONICLE

If you or someone you know would like to be a speaker at our monthly dinner, please contact Jim Mizera at 203-522-1959 or Jmizera@hotmail.com. The dinner is held the third Saturday of the month.

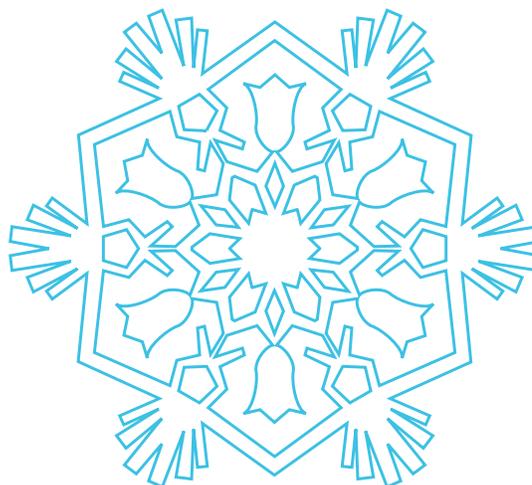


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going back to 2000 are available on the Internet at <http://scm66.org> (Note: this is a new URL). You can download the latest e-mail version of the Chronicle there, as well as previous issues. All issues are in read-only Adobe Acrobat format so there is no chance of viruses accompanying the files.

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Southern CT Mensa is looking for an Activities Coordinator. If you would like to fill this position, please contact President Rick D'Amico at usamarbiol@aol.com

SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS - DECEMBER

Thursday, December 18, 7:30

Southern CT Mensa Billiards Event

Come and join So. CT Mensa billiard enthusiasts for an evening of billiards, conversation and food. The "Pool Party" event this month will be held at ON CUE BILLIARDS, 50 W. Washington St., SOUTH NORWALK, CT. The pool hall is in the basement at the far inner corner of the 50 Washington Street office building. Easy access via either I-95 (Exit 15) or the Merritt (via the Route 7 Extension). The parking lot costs \$2 to park in, through 10:30pm - then the rate goes to \$5. There is nearby street parking if you don't mind walking a bit. On Cue Billiards Web Site: <http://www.oncuebilliardsandmusic.com> Google Maps link: <http://tinyurl.com/2tfunq>. Questions? Contact Tom O'Neill, doctec2@gmail.com.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Friday, January 9, 7:00

Southern CT and Western MA Joint Dinner

Monthly dinner at the Old Sorrento Restaurant, Newtown Road, Danbury, CT.

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Saturday, January 17, 6:30

Monthly Dinner

TONELLI'S RESTAURANT, 41 Grassy Plain St., Bethel, CT 06801. Local Mensan, poet, and novelist Jerry Brooker will talk about his recent trip to North Korea, a citizen diplomacy trip gone awry. Jerry will discuss his visits to the cities of Pyongyang, and Nam Pho, official museums, the Arirang Mass Games, and other sites, as well as the Juche philosophy that informs the nation, the strict controls, and the difficulties he experienced. Dress is casual. Before the presentation, we will enjoy dinner. Choose what you like from the menu; restaurant adds tip onto the bill. You can bring a donation of money or food to benefit the Connecticut Food Bank. Contact Jim Mizera, jmizera@hotmail.com, 203-522-1959, for information and reservations. Guests are welcome. Restaurant review: <http://acorn-online.net/acornonline/bestbets/bbets05-04-21.htm>. If you have suggestions for other places we can meet or how we can run our dinners better, please contact chapter President Rick D'Amico at usamarbiol@aol.com.

FROM STAMFORD:

1. Take I-95. Merge onto US-7 Connector NORTH via EXIT 15 toward NORWALK. 2. Take US-7 Connector to MAIN AVE / US-7. Continue to follow US-7 North about 2 miles. 3. Turn LEFT onto US-7 / CT-33 / WESTPORT RD & continue to follow US-7 about 5.5 miles. 4. Turn RIGHT onto SCHOOL ST / CT-107 / CT-57. Follow CT-107 about 1.5 miles. 5. Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto REDDING RD / CT-107. Follow REDDING RD. 5.7 miles. REDDING RD becomes CT-53. Go about 3 miles to the Restaurant, on the left at 41 Grassy Plain St. Bethel, CT 06801-2001
- FROM BRIDGEPORT:
1. Take CT-15 SOUTH / MERRITT PKWY Exit 44 toward CT-58 / FAIRFIELD / REDDING. 2. Turn LEFT onto CONGRESS ST. 3. Turn RIGHT onto

BLACK ROCK TURNPIKE / CT-58. Follow CT-58 about 15 miles. 4. Turn LEFT onto CT-302 / MILWAUKEE AVE. 5. Turn LEFT onto GREENWOOD AVE / CT-302 and go about 1.5 miles. 6. Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto GRASSY PLAIN ST / CT-53. Go about .1 miles to the Restaurant, at 41 Grassy Plain St.

FROM HARTFORD & I-84:

1. Take I-84 to Exit 5, the Route 53 exit.
2. Take Route 53 south about 3.3 miles.
3. Tonelli's Restaurant is on the right, shortly before the light and intersection.

CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS 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, 860-888-9867, email: lilith@beadylittleskies.com.

DECEMBER

3 Wednesday 6:45 pm

Poetry Meeting (NEW)

Mensan poets and poetry lovers, are invited to attend the December meeting of the Connecticut Poetry Society, Middletown Branch. The society meets sort-of-monthly at Middletown's Russell Library where meetings begin at around 6:45pm. For more info contact Society Secretary Bill Mahon at (860) 347-6175 or M Pamela Guinan at (860) 563-5761 or pamela.cwm@hotmail.com

4, 11, 18 Thursdays 7:00 pm

Scrabble

(ME) at Emmanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford. Ellen Leonard, 860-667-1966 (Please call first to make sure this is happening today, canceled on Jewish holidays.)

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5 Friday 5:30 pm

Happy Hour in Wallingford

(ME, 1st Fridays) Ann Polanski (contact her at 203-269-4565 or ann.polanski@rfsworld.com) hosts us upstairs at George's II Restaurant, 950 Yale Avenue, Wallingford, CT 06492 Phone: 203-269-1059. Directions: Exit 66 off Wilbur Cross Parkway. Turn left (south) onto Rte 5. Take first left that's not a highway entrance onto Yale Ave. George's II is in the Yale Plaza on the right.

6 Saturday 2:00 pm

Theater: The Skin of Our Teeth

by Thornton Wilder. Presented by Connecticut Repertory Theatre, Harriet S. Jorgensen Theatre, Storrs, CT. Call the box office directly at 860-486-4226. Let Barb know if you're coming and she will try to arrange carpools and dinner after the show. For more info contact Barb Holstein at 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net

7 Sunday 6:00 pm

Connecticut Lyric Opera

The Connecticut Lyric Opera will present CT's premier Russian performance of Tchaikovsky's EUGENE ONEGIN at Trinity On Main, 69 Main St. in New Britain. This is a live performance, and the cast includes our very own member Raquel Blonshine from Gales Ferry. Tickets are \$15 seniors, \$20 regular. Call 860-440-3594 or 860-229-2072. For more info contact Barb Holstein at 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net

10 Wednesday 5:30 pm

Happy Hour in Branford

(ME, 2nd Wed) Donovan's Reef 1212 Main Street, Branford Conn. 06405. The Donovan's Reef <http://donovans-reef.com> web site has a small map, and here are some directions with distances - from I-95 take exit 54/Cedar Street. Go south on Cedar Street crossing Rt. 1/Boston Post Road for about 0.5 mi. to Rose Street. Take a left on Rose and go 0.25 mi. to a driveway on the right which has a low sign that says "1188 - 1238" where you will enter a parking lot for a number of businesses in a complex known as Lockworks Square. Drive part way through the lot and look for Donovan's Reef on the left. Locals can also enter Lockworks Square from the Ivy Street side just off of Main Street where

Shoreline Foods faces Ivy. The lounge is on the left inside. I'll see about a table reservation and will likely have an "M" sign visible. We start around 6. I'm told there is some sort of daily bar goodie along with any menu items that you may want to order. Donovan's phone number is 203-488-5573. Questions? Contact Joe Wonowski at 203-785-2998 weekdays, and 203-457-9770 evenings. Hope to see you there!

12 Friday 7:00 pm

C&WM Mensa Holiday Party

at the Solomon Welles House, 220 Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield, CT (www.wethersfieldct.com/rec/directions.html#swhouse) Come feast and mingle with old and new friends, and maybe give your intellectual 2% at the Chapter Annual Meeting, too. Contact any ExComm member (contact info on the inside back cover) if you have questions or want to add anything to the agenda. Everybody welcome!

18 Thursday 6:30 pm

Pioneer Valley Dinner

(ME, 3rd Thursday)) at Mama Iguana's, on Main Street in Northampton, MA. Questions? Ian Fraser ianfraser@usa.net

20 Saturday 12:00 noon

Opera: Massenet's Thais

New production by John Cox, starring Renee Fleming and Thomas Hampson. Jesuc Lopez-Cobos conducts. Live telecast from the Metropolitan Opera House at Buckland Theatre in Manchester. Tickets are \$20 seniors, \$22 regular. We usually meet in the lobby at least 45 minutes before the performance. So do let Barb know if you are coming, so the group can be looking for you: Barb Holstein - 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net

28 Friday 5:00 pm

(may be cancelled, awaiting confirmation)

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

26 Friday 6:30 pm

Diner Dinner

(semimonthly, 2nd and 4th Fridays) 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. Questions? For info, contact Howard Brender at 860-635-5673 or howiebren@aol.com Subject: Diner Dinner

26 Wednesday 12 noon

Middlebury Lunch

(ME, last Wednesday) at Maggie McFly's in Middlebury, visible on the right from Rte. 63 just south of the Rte 63 and Rte 64 intersection. This intersection is at the end of a long ramp at Exit 17 on Rte 84 west. From this exit, turn left at the 63/64 intersection. If you use Exit 17 on Rte. 84 east (heading toward Hartford), turn left off the exit ramp and see Maggie McFly's on your left. Contact Richard Fogg at 860-274-2370 for more info.

28 Friday 6:30 pm

Diner Dinner

(semimonthly, 2nd and 4th Fridays) 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. Questions? For info, contact Howard Brender at 860-635-5673 or howiebren@aol.com Subject: Diner Dinner

31 Monday 5:30 pm

New Year's Eve - Celebrated Our Way!

The tradition continues! It's back to Cromwell for C&WM's own unique New Year's Eve bash. Unlike the rest of the nation (M's love to be different), we celebrate New Year's Eve at Greenwich Mean Time - 7 p.m. The party starts anytime after 5:30 p.m. At 7, we uncork the

champagne, sing Auld Lang Syne loudly and off-key, hug everyone in sight, & celebrate. We eat around 7:30 ish. By 9 p.m., you're outta' there - plenty of time to go on to another party, celebrate First Night in Hartford, or simply get home before the serious drinkers hit the road.

Wear your absolute fanciest outfit, BYOB, your favorite show-off dinner dish to share, and \$2 for the champagne kitty. RSVP to Barb Holstein - 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net - I need a head count to plan champagne.

Directions: 2 Old Colony Lane , Cromwell. I-91 N or S to Exit 22S onto Rte 9 South toward Middletown . First exit off Rte 9 = West St , Cromwell. Turn Right at end of exit ramp, first Right on Rte 3 No., first Right on Evergreen Rd. , & second Right onto Old Colony Lane . #2 is the very first house on the right - gray colonial, pink door, and lots of gargoyles to greet you. Contact me if you need other directions.

Note: This party is typically the largest house party of the year and is an absolute command performance - only a note from your mother or the LocSec will excuse you!!

LOOKING AHEAD

JANUARY

10 Saturday 1:00 pm

Opera: Puccini's LA RONDINE

New production by Nicolas Joel, starring Angela Ghergiu and Robert Alagna. Marco Armiliato conducts. For more info contact Barb Holstein at 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net

24 Saturday 1:00 pm

Opera: Gluck's ORFEO ED EURDICE

starring Stephanie Blyth and Danielle de Neise. James Levine conducts. For more info contact Barb Holstein at 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net

31 Saturday 12:00 Noon

Let's Do Lunch at Sake's Japanese Restaurant in Wethersfield, CT followed by

January 31 2:00 pm

Book Discussion Group

will be meeting at Pam Guinan's in Wethersfield to discuss **Three Cups of Tea: One Man's**

SUDOKUGRAMS by official American Mensa Puzzle Book authors Alan Stillson and Frank Longo

Logic and Language Linked! A sudoku variation that truly combines logic and wordplay.

The rules of Sudokugrams (see <http://sudokugrams.com> for more details and sample puzzles) in a nutshell:

1. Fill in the empty squares with the letters in the Letter Pool, using each letter only once.
2. Make sure there are no repeating letters in any of the rows, columns, or heavily outlined 2 x 2 boxes.
3. Form twelve different sets of four letters in the rows, columns, and 2 x 2 boxes so that each set can be anagrammed (unscrambled) into a common, clean, non-capitalized word.

	E	O	
A		T	U
	S	R	E
R			

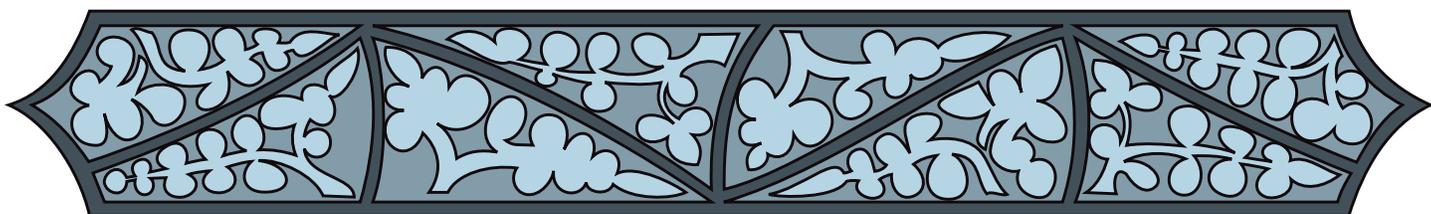
Letter pool: BRILLIG

Answer on page 14

Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin (nonfiction) ??? On a 1993 expedition to climb K2 in honor of his sister Christa, who had died of epilepsy at 23, Mortenson stumbled upon a remote mountain village in Pakistan. Out of gratitude for the villagers' assistance when he was lost and near death, he vowed to build a school for the children who were scratching lessons in the dirt. Raised by his missionary parents in Tanzania, Mortenson was used to dealing with exotic cultures and developing nations. Still, he faced daunting challenges of raising funds, death threats from enraged mullahs, separation from his family, and a kidnapping to eventually build 55 schools in Taliban territory. Award-winning journalist Relin recounts the slow and arduous task Mortenson set for himself, a one-man mission aimed particularly at bringing education to young girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Readers interested in a fresh perspective on the cultures and development efforts of Central Asia will love this incredible story of a humanitarian endeavor.

And for **March** (at Pam Guinan's, date TBA), the group will be discussing ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*** by Mark Haddon (fiction) Christopher Boone, the autistic 15-year-old narrator of this revelatory novel, relaxes by groaning and doing math problems in his head, eats red-but not yellow or brown-foods and screams when he is touched. Strange

as he may seem, other people are far more of a conundrum to him, for he lacks the intuitive "theory of mind" by which most of us sense what's going on in other people's heads. When his neighbor's poodle is killed and Christopher is falsely accused of the crime, he decides that he will take a page from Sherlock Holmes (one of his favorite characters) and track down the killer. As the mystery leads him to the secrets of his parents' broken marriage and then into an odyssey to find his place in the world, he must fall back on deductive logic to navigate the emotional complexities of a social world that remains a closed book to him. In the hands of first-time novelist Haddon, Christopher is a fascinating case study and, above all, a sympathetic boy: not closed off, as the stereotype would have it, but too open-overwhelmed by sensations, bereft of the filters through which normal people screen their surroundings. Christopher can only make sense of the chaos of stimuli by imposing arbitrary patterns ("4 yellow cars in a row made it a Black Day, which is a day when I don't speak to anyone and sit on my own reading books and don't eat my lunch and Take No Risks"). His literal-minded observations make for a kind of poetic sensibility and a poignant evocation of character. Though Christopher insists, "This will not be a funny book. I cannot tell jokes because I do not understand them," the novel brims with touching, ironic humor. The result is an eye-opening work in a unique and compelling literary voice.



*FROM THE REGIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN**LORI NORRIS**RVCHAT*

Happy Holidays!

At the beginning of November, my husband and I drove from Rhode Island to Vermont to lunch with several Vermont Mensans. It was a beautiful day, but on the way home I looked out the window and did a double take. The sun was shining but icicles hung from the granite outcroppings of rock along the highway in Vermont and New Hampshire. Now, I know that northern New Englanders and New Yorkers are probably accustomed to that sight, but here in southern New England we've barely (once) even had to scrape car windows in the morning. Over the past month or so, we have been working on painting the house and garage, along with some necessary carpentry work, but now the work is done and we can sit back and relax for the winter. OR I can finally start painting the upstairs and the stairwells. Home improvements never seem to be finished.

This fall I have taken a major step in my life. As I mentioned previously, the law firm that I was employed at went out of business in the spring. After much consideration, I have set up a small office as a sole practitioner. I could not pass up the opportunity to have more control over my life and to help people with the trials and tribulations of their lives. I look forward to the challenge and, hopefully, the satisfaction coming from helping those in need.

Attention Maine Mensans. You should have received a mailing in late October or early

November from the national office. This mailing included the proposed bylaws along with a ballot about the bylaws and a ballot for election of officers. Please take the time to vote. I am so thrilled that the re-birth of Maine Mensa is moving forward. If you did not receive a ballot, please contact me.

Here's a suggestion for holiday gifts for your non-Mensan friends: In December, American Mensa will be offering Home Tests for 1/2 price: \$9 instead of the regular \$18. This will be a great time to purchase Home Tests to share with those who you think may be interested in Mensa. To purchase a 1/2 price Home Test, visit <http://www.us.mensa.org/mht> between Dec. 1 and Dec. 31. The Home Test will not qualify a person for Mensa membership, but will give them an idea of how they will fare on the Mensa Admission Test.

Don't forget to check out AML's Benefits and Services webpage for deals for Mensans. Some of these include A&E/History Channel (20% discount plus free shipping); Office Depot (10% discount on purchases and 60% discount on printing); magazine subscriptions (Brain, Child; mental floss; Popular Science; Science Illustrated; and Scientific American MIND) as well as a variety of travel services (car rentals, hotel, travel agency).

Lori

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.

THE NOVEMBER DINNER

IQ: NATURE AND NURTURE

For more than a century, psychologists have been debating whether intelligence is inherited or acquired. At our November dinner, Southern CT Mensans discussed a recent effort to resolve the debate. While attendance was light because of a storm, those who made it enjoyed examining the arguments about intelligence and the different lines of evidence psychologists and other investigators have brought forth.

THE FLYNN EFFECT

Many Mensans, not to mention the general public, don't realize that IQ scores have been rising all over the world for several decades. The tests are periodically re-centered to keep 100 as the average, and this has obscured the consistent rise in scores. But Dr. James Flynn, a U.S. expatriate who taught political science in New Zealand before retiring in 1997, did a great deal to bring this trend to light when he wrote about it in the 1980s. Although the effect was actually first noticed by psychologists in the 1940s, the rise in IQ was dubbed "the Flynn Effect" by Charles Murray and the late Dr. Richard Herrnstein in their 1994 book *The Bell Curve*. The name stuck and interest in the trend grew.

The Flynn Effect was surprisingly strong, pervasive, and steady at least into the 1990s. The general increase in IQ was about 3 points a decade, but in some countries it was much greater. For example, the average IQ score of conscripts in the Dutch army showed a gain of 21 points from 1952 to 1982. Gains have occurred in virtually every nation on virtually every type of IQ test given.

NATURE VS. NURTURE

The rapid rise in IQ seems to damage the hereditary view of IQ. Since the genes of the general population cannot have improved much over the short span of a few generations, much less over a single decade, the rise must be due to changes in the environment - the Nurture side of the debate. But statistical studies of IQ continue to show heredity to be the dominant influence,

with correlations that grow greater the more closely related people are. In particular, the high correlation between the IQs of identical twins raised apart has always provided strong support for Nature in the IQ debate. So psychometricians have been debating whether there is a conflict between the clearly evident Flynn Effect and the numerous studies that support genetic explanations of intelligence.

In 2001, Dr. Flynn and economist Dr. William Dickens of the Univ. of California, Berkeley, and the Brookings Institute proposed a solution to the puzzle. They argued that a beneficial environment can multiply an initial IQ advantage, an effect they call "the social multiplier". Thus a child born with a 2% higher IQ will gravitate toward more intellectual friends and pursuits, which will in turn stimulate his intelligence. Teachers and other adults may also notice his receptiveness to verbal or mathematical challenges and encourage and stimulate him. By maturity, these positive influences can produce a double-digit gain in IQ. Conversely, a person born with below-average genes for intelligence will avoid intellectual activities and gifted youngsters and mentors may neglect him. Hence, his IQ will likely stagnate or deteriorate. In either case, genes and environment are acting together and in the same direction, which complicates statistical investigation.

Flynn and Dickens believe that studies of IQ have greatly exaggerated the effect of heredity because they have assumed that genetic endowments and environments are uncorrelated. This would mask the joint effect of genes and environment and exaggerate the effect of genes. For example, the two professors argue that twin studies have overstated the genetic influence on intelligence because they have neglected the fact that twins raised apart are often raised in similar socioeconomic environments - sometimes they are even raised in relatives' homes. The social benefits and detriments they face may actually be quite similar even if they never meet each other.

The social multiplier effect plausibly explains why young children enrolled in intellectual-enrichment programs like Head Start often improve their IQ scores early but then regress

when they leave the program and return to their neighborhood culture. It can also explain why Chinese immigrants to the U.S. achieved economic success before they experienced IQ gains.

The details of the Flynn Effect seem to undermine both the hard genetic view of intelligence and the unitary view of intelligence that sees intelligence as one thing - general intelligence, or *g*. To those who say that the rise in intelligence has not been in general intelligence, Flynn and Dickens point out that the rise has been greatest on the heavily *g*-loaded Raven's Progressive Matrices test, which measures people's ability to place shapes into series, a task that does not depend on education or culture. They also note that scores on some subtests of IQ tests have risen much more than scores on other sections. For instance, scores on the visual skill portions of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) have risen about 12 - 24 points, while the information, arithmetic, and vocabulary scores have only risen 2 - 4 points. If the increases vary so much, this suggests that intelligence is not unitary but multiple, as Richard Sternberg of Yale and Howard Gardner and others have argued.

WHAT'S CAUSING THE SOCIAL MULTIPLIER?

If the environment is increasing intelligence, what in the environment is doing the boosting? The environment is difficult to quantify, so research into this question faces many hurdles. To qualify as a social multiplier, an environmental factor must not correlate with genetic inheritance, and it must be widespread, significant, and persistent. Flynn and Dickens suggest that the most likely factors are several consistent social and technological trends that have marked industrialized societies and probably sharpened our mental muscles. For starters, smaller families may have increased the time parents can devote to each child. Also, the growth in leisure time has probably lessened the time we spend in drudgery and expanded our time for avocations that sharpen our brains. Watching radio and television has likely exposed us to more variety in entertainment and culture. Perhaps most importantly, more complex jobs and machinery have engaged us more often in abstract thinking. Each of these may be giving us more of a mental workout than our forebears

had. In summary, Dr. Flynn believes that the modern, industrialized world encourages people to think in a different way, a less concrete and more conceptual way, than citizens in the more agricultural, less connected world of a century ago. This is precisely the type of thinking that IQ tests measure.

In our discussion, we hashed over these and other possible explanations for the rise in IQ scores. Everyone seemed to agree that technology has made us much more familiar with complex visuals, as the Wechsler results imply. Some cited the growing evidence for neuroplasticity - the changes that experiences cause in the brain. Before the 1980s, scientists thought that most brain areas did not change after the first three years of life, but further research has shown that even elderly persons can gain new nerve cells and rewire old ones. If our brain is more malleable than previously thought, so may our intelligence be.

CRITICISMS AND QUESTIONS

Some psychologists who support a strongly genetic explanation of intelligence say that the social multiplier is not social at all. Dr. Richard Lynn argues that improved nutrition has caused the increase in intelligence. He thinks that the gains in the IQ's of 4-year olds favor a nutritional explanation because these youngsters have yet to experience society much. But Flynn and most researchers produce evidence showing that nutritional improvements leveled off after 1950.

One generally overlooked biological explanation is earlier maturity, for which there is ample evidence. Skeletons taken from medieval burial sites show 10-year olds then were an amazing eight inches shorter than today's 10-year olds while the disparity in adult heights was much less. Children are definitely achieving puberty earlier now than their great-grandparents did. The average onset of menstruation declined about eight months per generation in the Western World after 1900 before leveling off. Soldiers entering the army now are about 2 inches taller than the World War II soldiers. We see that peasant children in the agricultural societies of Third World reach puberty at about age 17, while youngsters in the developed world

reach puberty at 13. Hence, modern life certainly seems to promote earlier physical maturity. Average brain weight and capacity have increased during the IQ-surge, so perhaps brain connections are growing earlier as well. This might mean that to get a fair measure of the change in IQ, we should compare the IQ of today's generation of twelve-year old with the average IQ of yesteryears' fourteen or fifteen-year olds. However, earlier maturity cannot explain why today's adults, including even senior citizens, are scoring higher on IQ tests.

One Mensan raised the point that SAT scores, unlike IQ scores, have not risen over the years. On the contrary, they actually declined sharply from 1963 - 1975. Since the SAT was until 1995 considered an acceptable IQ test, how can this be? It could be explained by the fact that most IQ tests emphasize visual problems much more than academic tests like the SAT do. Also, the SAT is taken mostly by college-bound students, while IQ tests are taken by the general population. The PSAT, which precedes the SAT and is taken by a broader group of students, did not show the same decline as the SAT did. But this would only make the case that SAT scores have stayed about the same when demographic changes are considered; it would not answer the question why SAT scores have not risen, as one would expect if we are becoming more intelligent.

Some more general questions are the questions that Flynn himself raised: If IQ's have risen, why have we not experienced a cultural renaissance? Why do our forefathers not seem vastly less intelligent than we are, as the Flynn Effect might imply? Why have social pathologies like crime and illegitimacy, which are strongly correlated with low IQ's, risen over the long term? Here again, the differences on different portions of intelligence tests may provide a partial explanation but it is unclear whether psychometric evidence can provide a clear answer.

FLYNN: WHAT IS INTELLIGENCE?

Any thorough discussion of intelligence must ultimately ask what intelligence is. We concluded the evening by briefly looking at Dr. Flynn view of intelligence (see What is intelligence? Beyond the Flynn effect, Cambridge, UK ; New

York, Cambridge University Press, 2007. ISBN 9780521880077). For him, it is multi-dimensional and consists of:

- Mental Acuity: The ability to provide on-the-spot solutions to problems.
- Habits Of Mind: The detachment and use of abstract from concrete thinking is a crucial dimension.
- Attitudes: For instance, taking abstract reasoning seriously.
- Knowledge and Information: The more you have, the more problems you can attack.
- Speed Of Information Processing: Assimilating information better and quicker.
- Memory: How one accesses and retains knowledge and information.

While this view seemed quite plausible to the Mensans on hand, we did not dig deeply into the topic since it might have required several more evenings. In the course of our meeting, we did touch on the question of multiple intelligence theories a few times, and it is interesting to compare James Flynn's concept of intelligence with the models advanced by Robert Sternberg and Howard Gardner. The nature of intelligence has come up in our previous dinners devoted to the topics of emotional intelligence and sharpening brainpower, so it is a topic that we will probably consider at a future meeting.

The ideas of Dr. Flynn and Dr. Dickens and their critics should interest all Mensans. The discussion they have engendered can help us examine just how much we know about intelligence, and think more clearly about what we can do to promote it.

NEXT DINNER: There will be no SCM dinner in December. Our next dinner will be Saturday, January 17, at our usual location, Tonelli's Restaurant, Bethel, CT. Local Mensan Jerry Brooker will talk about his trip to North Korea, and show slides of the country.

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. Which is more profound, tragedy or comedy?
2. How many gallons are in a barrel of oil?
3. What historians write/wrote most concisely?
4. What percentage of English words have more than one syllable?
5. What is the biggest mistake someone starting a new business can make?
6. How much does the average U.S. adult male weight?
7. Name the longest book titles that you can think of.
8. What U.S. metropolitan areas have the most and the least freeway miles per capita?

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

1. How many banks are there in the United States?
A: At the end of 2004, there were 9,116 FDIC-insured banking institutions - 7,712 commercial banks and 1,404 savings banks.
3. Define "dialectic".
A: Dialectic has several meanings. One general meaning is "the art or practice of logical discussion in investigating the truth of a theory or opinion". A second, narrower definition is "a method of argument or exposition that systematically weighs contradictory facts or ideas to try to resolve their real or apparent contradictions." A third definition, narrower still but important, is the Hegelian definition: "a method of arriving at the truth by stating a thesis, developing a contradictory antithesis, and combining and resolving them into a coherent synthesis."
5. What percentage of U.S. homeowners have paid off their mortgage?
What percentage of their mortgage has the average U.S. homeowner paid off?
A: According to the Census Bureau, about 32% of U.S. homeowners have paid off their mortgage. The average U.S. homeowner has about 47% equity in their home.

GOOD WINE CHEAP

(and good food to go with it)

This month's column will focus on wine and food for a Holiday celebration. This of course means sparkling wine and a main course so delightful that your friends and family will be talking about it for months.

The wines are French sparkling wines that are not from the Champagne region. The two main differences between these wines and the Champagne variety are that 1) they can not be called "Champagne" by French law, and 2) they provide the same quality for about 1/3 to 1/2 the price. The first sparkler is Brut Dargent, Blanc de Blanc (non-vintage), which is made from the Chardonnay grape. This is a dry and elegant wine that hints of citrus and almonds in the mouth. It ends with a brief but bright finish. It's nose and taste reminded me of the fine Chardonnay from the Chablis region of France. It is available for \$9 - \$12 a bottle.

The second sparkling wine is Veuve du Vernay, Brut Blanc de Blanc (non-vintage). Several leading wine magazines have recognized it as a "Best Buy". The taste is dry and fruity with a hint of caramel and apricot, and it has a smooth and balanced finish. I have found it readily available for \$7 - \$9 a bottle.

MINI BEEF WELLINGTONS WITH GORGONZOLA

(Recipe adapted from Gourmet Magazine, January, 1998)

Ingredients:

- 8 (1 1/2-inch-thick, 6 ounce) center-cut filets mignons
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 8 large mushrooms (about 1/2 pound total)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs
- 2 puff pastry sheets (from a 17 1/4-ounce package frozen puff pastry), thawed
- 1/2 cup Gorgonzola (about 5 ounces)

Pat filets mignons dry and season with salt and pepper. Sear on both sides in saute pan with heated oil. Chill filets, covered, until cold, about 1 hour. Thinly slice mushrooms. In a heavy skillet, cook in butter with shallot, garlic, and salt and pepper to taste, over moderate heat, stirring until mushrooms are lightly browned. Transfer mushroom mixture to a bowl to cool completely. In a small bowl, lightly beat eggs to make an egg wash. On a lightly floured surface roll out puff pastry sheets into 2 (14-inch) squares. Trim edges to form 2 (13-inch) squares and cut each square into 4 (6 1/2-inch) squares. Put 1 tablespoon Gorgonzola in center of 1 square and top with 1/8 of the mushroom mixture. Top mushroom mixture with a filet mignon, pressing it down gently, and wrap 2 opposite corners of puff pastry over filet, overlapping them. Seal seam with egg wash. Wrap remaining 2 corners of pastry over filet and seal in same manner. Seal any gaps with egg wash and press pastry around filet to enclose completely. Arrange beef Wellington, seam side down, in a non-stick-baking pan. Make 7 more beef Wellingtons in same manner. Chill remaining egg wash for brushing on pastry just before baking. Chill beef Wellingtons, loosely covered, at least 1 hour and up to 1 day. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Brush top and sides of each beef Wellington with some remaining egg wash and bake 20 to 30 minutes, or until pastry is golden and the meat temperature is 117 degrees F. Sauce: 2 cups veal or beef demi-glace; 4 tablespoons Madeira Make sauce while beef Wellingtons are baking. In a saucepan, boil demi-glace and Madeira 1 minute and keep sauce warm. Serve beef Wellingtons with sauce. Yield: 8 servings. During this course, I would serve a hearty cabernet sauvignon such as the Robert Mondavi Private Selection 2006 from California.

John Grover is a member of Mensa of Northeastern New York. He lives with his wife Sharon in the Hudson Valley of New York. He hopes that you will contact him with your comments and favorite wines at grover@berk.com.

NOTED & QUOTED

If you can get nothing better out of the world, get a good dinner out of it, at least.

-Herman Melville, (1819 - 1891), *Moby Dick*

The intelligent man who is proud of his intelligence is like the condemned man who is proud of his large cell.

- Simone Weil, (1909 - 1943), *French philosopher*

The horse is the only animal into which one can bang nails. - Jules Renard, (1864 - 1910), *French novelist and playwright*

A man has only one way of being immortal on earth: he has to forget he is a mortal.

- Jean Giraudoux, (1882 - 1944), *French novelist, dramatist, essayist, and diplomat*

The story of the human race is the story of men and women selling themselves short.

- Abraham Maslow, (1908 - 1970), *U.S. psychologist, pioneer of humanistic psychology*

One never notices what has been done; one can only see what remains to be done.

- Marie Curie, (1867 - 1934), *Polish-French chemist*

You can't expect to win unless you know why you lose. - Benjamin Lipson, *insurance ombudsman, author, columnist*

The ego is not master in his own house.

- Sigmund Freud, (1856 - 1939)

If you are near the enemy, make him believe you are far from him. If you are far from the enemy, make him believe you are near.

- Sun-Tzu, (6th cent. B.C.E.), *Chinese philosopher, The Art of War*

Entertaining is one method of avoiding people.

- Elizabeth Bibesco, (1897 - 1945), *English novelist and poet*

Sadness is almost never anything but a form of fatigue. - Andre Gide, (1869 - 1951), *French novelist*

One must always hope when one is desperate, and doubt when one hopes.

- Gustav Flaubert, (1821 - 1880), *French realist novelist*

Life without a friend is death without a witness.

- Spanish Proverb

An autobiography is an obituary in serial form with the last installment missing. - Quentin Crisp, (1908 - 1999), *English writer, actor, and raconteur*

A proverb is the wisdom of many and the wit of one.

- Lord John Russell, (1792 - 1878), *British Prime Minister*

He who limps still walks.

- Stanislaw Lec, (1909 - 1966), *Polish writer, aphorist*

Pride is pleasure arising from a man's thinking too highly of himself. - Benedict Spinoza, (1632 - 1677)

Hollywood is a place where people from Iowa mistake each other for stars. - Fred Allen, (1894 - 1956), *U.S. radio comedian, vaudeville juggler*

The only end of writing is to enable the readers better to enjoy life, or better to endure it.

- Samuel Johnson, (1709 - 84), *English poet, critic, and lexicographer*

The biggest obstacle to professional writing is the necessity for changing a typewriter ribbon.

- Robert Benchley, (1889 - 1945), *American humorist*

Life is subject to change without notice.

-Richard Eaton

There are no professionals in the game of life, only rank amateurs. - Rein Nomm, *Professor, economic analyst, photographer, aphorist.*

Life is not holding a good hand; Life is playing a poor hand well. - Danish Proverb

The squirrel that you kill in jest, dies in earnest.

- Henry David Thoreau, (1817 - 1862)

Speech is the gift of all, but thought of few.

- Marcus Cato. (234 - 149 B.C.E.), *Roman statesman, historian*

NOTED & QUOTED

Misers get up early in the morning; and burglars, I am informed, get up the night before.

- G.K. Chesterton, (1874 - 1936), *Tremendous Trifles*

It's the gossip columnist's business to write about what is none of his business.

- Louis Kronenberger, (1904 - 1980), U.S. author and drama critic

It is possible to provide security against other ills, but as far as death is concerned, we men live in a city without walls.

- Epicurus, (341 ? - 270 ? B.C.E.), Greek philosopher

A great artist can paint a great picture on a small canvas. - Charles Dudley Warner, (1829 - 1900), U.S. editor and essayist

Steel your sensibilities, so that life shall hurt you as little as possible.

- Zeno of Citium, (333 - 264 B.C.E.),

Never mistake endurance for hospitality.

- Mark Twain, (1835 - 1910)

Haunted houses are never locked. - TV Truths

Perfect paranoia is perfect awareness.

- Anonymous

It is possible that people need to believe they are unmanaged if they are to be managed effectively. - John Kenneth Galbraith, (1908 - 2006), Canadian-born U.S. economist

It is a source of consolation to look back upon those great misfortunes which never happened.

- Arthur Schopenhauer, (1788 - 1860), German philosopher

I lit my pipe. A pipe is a pocket philosopher, a truer one than Socrates. For it never asks questions. Socrates must have been very tiresome when one thinks of it.

- Ouida, (1839 - 1908), (Marie Louise de la Ramee), English novelist and social critic.

There are two motives for reading a book: one, that you enjoy it; the other, that you can boast about it. - Bertrand Russell, (1872 - 1970), English philosopher and mathematician

A truly great book should be read in youth, again in maturity and once more in old age, as a fine building should be seen by morning light, at noon and by moonlight.

- Robertson Davies, (1913 - 1995), Canadian novelist, playwright, critic, and journalist

Sudokogram answer

L	E	O	R
A	B	T	U
I	S	R	E
R	G	I	L

Letter Pool: TOP TWO

Across: ROLE, TUBA, RISE, GIRL

Down: LAIR, BEGS, RIOT, RULE

Boxes: BALE, TOUR, RIGS, RILE

Note: Other anagrams like ABUT are okay

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