

MOMENTUM

The Voice of Mensa in New Hampshire and Maine

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May 2005



NEWS

...by, for, and about NH/Maine Mensans!

Mensans on the radio...

Mensans on television...

Mensans in the newspaper..





Bauman's Quiver

LocSec John Bauman

The new fiscal year for membership is upon us and the packet of materials from National has not arrived in the mail yet, but history tells us that a bunch of you did not renew in time to be counted as members for 2006. There was a flurry of joining in March and we ended the year with a total of 515 members on the rolls, a net gain of 16 for the month. My understanding is that the address labels for this issue are printed based on the names that were current as of that 31 March drop-dead date, so the approximately 20% of you who did not renew are getting this issue gratis and I will take this opportunity to ask you once more to send in your dues, so that you can take advantage of that which NH Mensa holds in store for the summer. The Saturday barbecues/FSMs/dogfests that take place at Allemanse from June through September are generally some of the best attended, most family-friendly and undeniably most memorable events that appear on the calendar in the course of the year. John McGondel began holding events at his home last summer and has promised to convene two or more of the same shindigs this year, presumably with the live band still in attendance. Joe Zanca has promised to revive weekends at his home this summer, and for those longstanding members who still may remember fondly Winter Weekends at Bunnyshire, while we may not replicate exactly those storied events of bygone years, the 2005 installments should prove to be well worth attending - Joe has given me some insights into what to expect, and I know that a Road Rally and a 20-course Chinese meal are being planned.

On a less sexy and more pragmatic note, if you are not a current member, you cannot vote in the election of national officers that is coming to its culmination as this issue goes to press. If you want to have a voice in determining the direction that American Mensa Ltd. seems headed, this is one of the few ways that you as a rank and file member can make your preferences known, by exercising your voting privilege and helping to elect the candidates that best reflect your values and agendas. Jean Becker's replacement will be sworn in at the AG and this is your one chance to decide who that successor is. On a more local stage, our Region is one of the few that does not have an unopposed RVC, and there is an actual choice to be made. **Make your membership count** - send in your dues and vote.

May is the month that includes one of my personal favorite Mensa activities - the Spring Mountain Climb, which is hosted by Boston Mensa. It has been a biannual custom of Mensa to convene in the White Mountains for over twenty years now and I became a participant beginning in the fall of 2001. Although the event title may indicate that hiking is involved, recent goers have chosen to exercise through mountain biking, kayaking, bicycle touring and hardcore porch-sitting during the times that I have been involved. There is always a contingent whose physical limitations preclude them from the outset from participating in anything mildly strenuous - they just come to do needlepoint, catch up on their reading, walk along the banks of a gurgling brook or engage in marathon


conversation. The lodge that we currently use for a base of operations is located in North Woodstock, which is right next to Lincoln, a site of reportedly pretty good shopping. Those who want to range farther afield can go to the outlet stores in Littleton, if shopping is on your mind. At a cost of \$60 for two nights' lodging, along with two home-cooked breakfasts and an increasingly grand Saturday dinner, you cannot begin to approach this type of value anywhere. Please consider joining your fellow Mensans this month to look for signs of moose and count the frost heaves.

Attendance at NH Mensa events the last couple of months seems gratifyingly robust. We had 14 drive to Newcastle to attend a protracted breakfast at Wentworth-By-the-Sea; regrettably, the seacoast inhabitants that might have been expected were nowhere to be seen. While this was one of the priciest venues that Second Sunday Brunch has ever tried, I think that those who tried the fare will attest that it was well worth the price of admission: as the Mastercard campaign reminds us, the fresh-squeezed OJ and champers that they continually poured until you said stop - priceless. Temperance League in March offered French being spoken among the many conversations that took place - a recent prospect who had taken the admissions test is an intern from Paris who will be in this country working at Saint Gobain in Merrimack for about six months. He was willing to attend an event less than a week after being tested, and propitiously, Jacques decided that evening to drive up from Lowell. So the two of them sat there yammering away to each other, and hopefully, our intern will be able to go back to France after his sojourn here and be able to bring fond memories and report

favorable impressions of American Mensa to our French counterparts. TL this month had 22 attendees - more fannies than we had seats to put them in! I have noticed that we no longer take the first note from the band in the next room as our cue that it is time to leave. It used to be fairly predictable that the Mensa crowd would take it outside at about 2100. Now we pay no attention at all to that audio prompt and I find that when the smoke finally drives me out after 2200, that I am usually one of the first to leave. A recent letter to the editor sniffed that the calendar entails nothing more than parties for members. While I might disagree with this characterization, I would also offer that there is nothing wrong with parties; and while these events might not be deemed to be "serious" enough, those who attend would probably agree that those members who stay away are the ones who are missing out. As a new event, there is an opportunity to go to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston with other Ms, if you feel that you need redeeming qualities to turn out. Seven members sallied forth to the inaugural trip in March - look for details concerning the April trip elsewhere in this issue. The point is this - we have 515 souls lumped together for administrative purposes with no guarantee of having anything in common. If you get to the end of a membership year and tell yourself that Mensa sucks, who is responsible? Did you attend anything during the year? If you claim that there is nothing that interests you, then host an event yourself. Enough said.

Well, the first Red Sox - Yankees series is in the record books and it looks like it is going to be an interesting summer. Wells and Clement do not look like the second coming, yet, but I am absolutely giddy over the fact that we seem to own

Rivera. Steinbrenner may have been able to land the Big Unit, but at the age of 41, it seems unlikely that he will be able to throw a complete game every time. But with the Red Sox inside his closer's head, the Boss may demand just that. Has

anyone besides me noticed that Navy lacrosse is ranked 7th in the nation? Hopefully, they will be going to the NCAA finals, again, this year. See you round the ballpark. GO NAVY, BEAT HOPKINS! 



What's Cooking in Region 1

Region 1 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 and 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 1 April. 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 24 April. 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 and Potato Matzo Pie)

8 medium potatoes
Two 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
1½ 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 ¼"-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 ½ 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. ■



Intelligence Is...

What's your definition of intelligence? Each month, we'll print a definition of intelligence provided by one of our members. Send your definition to Editor Claire Natola at editor@nh.us.mensa.org or 21 Hillrise Lane, Meredith, NH 03253 for consideration in a future issue of *Momentum*. This month, Ric Werme of Penacook, N.H. offers a thought on the relationship between intelligence and knowledge:

*Intelligence is the ability to learn;
knowledge is what you've learned.*

Ric continues: "Just because you're intelligent doesn't mean you know anything!

"We can even write this relationship mathematically. If K is knowledge, now is your current age, Iq is IQ, and e is effort at learning, then

$$K = \int_0^{now} Iq \times e(t) dt$$

says that knowledge is your intelligence multiplied by total effort you've invested in learning."



NH Mensa in the News

‘High IQ Society’ Tests Brain Power in Search for Members

by Victoria McGrane

[Initially published May 23, 2004 in *The Sentinel* of Keene, N.H., all rights reserved (www.keenesentinel.com).]

Louisa May Alcott once observed there’s little danger real talent will go overlooked. Garron Lohman of Troy hoped Saturday was his day to be noticed.

The 20-year-old cook was the only person to show up for Mensa’s admission test. The “high IQ society,” as its members call it, opens its doors to anyone who can show he is more intelligent than 98 percent of the general population.

Lohman said he’d always done well on standardized tests, so when his grandmother showed him a notice about the Mensa test, he decided to try.

“Because then I get to tell people I’m part of Mensa,” he said as he walked into Franklin Pierce College’s Keene campus.

Mensa means table in Latin, and the name indicates that all members are equal, says the N.H. Mensa Web site. Its stated mission is “to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity.” Members describe it as mainly a social organization.

“I kind of did it just for self-affirmation,” said William G. Costa, an adjunct professor of business at Franklin Pierce’s Rindge campus, about his decision to join Mensa six years ago.

The idea that he wasn’t smart, a message he’d heard through high school,

stuck with him despite good scores on the Miller Analogies Test, which got him into graduate school. Ten years later he saw a Mensa advertisement. It said those same test scores qualified him for the society.

Margaret Brodhead of Troy, who administered Saturday’s test, said she joined to meet people. “That has happened,” said the medical transcriptionist. “It’s a complete cross section of personalities and all different types.”

A group of New Hampshire, Vermont, and northern Massachusetts Mensa members meets monthly for brunch at the Marina Restaurant in Brattleboro. There are also special interest groups – called SIGs – for members who share common passions. They range from an Age of Chivalry SIG to a Skydiving one. Costa said he’s part of a Sherlock Holmes SIG.

Inside, Lohman sat down with two sharpened pencils for 90 minutes of testing. First, he’d take Wonderlic Personnel Test, a 10-minute test of cognitive ability. Next, he’d take the hour-long Mensa Admissions test, a combination of vocabulary, math, logic and deductive reasoning questions.

Scary as that may sound, 70 percent of people who take the tests score well enough to join Mensa, said Brodhead, who’s training to be a Mensa test proctor.

“Anybody who thinks he or she might qualify should be encouraged to take the test,” she said. “Because it’s a self-selected group.”

Applicants need only score in the top 2 percent on one of the two tests to make the cut. The tests are scored by Mensa

psychologists in Texas. Scores are reported on a pass-fail basis only. A lawsuit some years back stopped the practice of telling people their actual IQ score, Costa said.

People can also get into Mensa with previous scores on other tests, including the LSAT and the GMAT.

Lohman should get his Mensa answer in about two weeks. He left the tests feeling confident and looking forward to meeting new people through the group. But he added that getting in wouldn't change his life.

"I'm not superficial like that," he said.

Weeks Later, Test Still Haunts Her

by Teresa Santoski

[Initially published October 12, 2004 in *The Telegraph* of Nashua, N.H., all rights reserved (www.nashuatelegraph.com).]

What do a cheese grater, a necktie and an alarm clock have in common?

I've been trying to figure this out since I sat for the Mensa admissions test about two weeks ago. I thought if I pondered it long enough, I'd wake up yelling it at 2 in the morning, like that time when I forgot the name of that guy - you know, the one who did that thing.

But as more time passes and I still have no clue, I've realized I'll probably never know, and years from now, my children will ask me why I cry every time I see a cheese grater.

The Mensa admissions test is actually two tests: the Wonderlic, which is word based, and a test that's adapted from the California Short-Form Test of Mental Maturity, which is more visual in nature. That way, people who process images better than words and people who process words better than images have an equal chance of getting into Mensa. According to my proctor, John Bauman, they test the same thing in different forms.

I was given 12 minutes to do as much of the Wonderlic as I could - it's rare for anyone to finish this test because you're only given 12 minutes - and spent most of the time trying not to laugh because the test name sounds like an ice-cream company from the 1950s.

The questions involving words and language were fun and pretty easy - no problems there - but math has never been my strong suit. At least, not the kind of math you have to do in your head, without a calculator.

Then my proctor gave me the answer sheet for the second test. It's been a good four years since I've taken the SAT, but every time I see one of those answer sheets with the little bubbles on them, every muscle in my body tenses and adrenaline starts surging through my veins.

This is kind of a bad thing because the timesheet I have to fill out at one of my jobs looks like an SAT answer sheet. I know some people get anxious about their paychecks, but I don't think they mean like that.

In spite of the unanticipated adrenaline rush, the second test was more my style, which surprised me. I'm a writer, so I had always assumed that I related to words better than images, but apparently not. Maybe this is what happens when you watch too much television.

My proctor began the test by reading me a story. This was quite a nice way to begin an exam, but I was kind of confused as to why he was reading it to me. People tend to have a good reason for telling me stories - usually it's because they want something from me.

It turned out there was a good reason for this story, too. The last section on the exam consists of questions about the story. Sneaky.

The other six sections of the test were pretty straightforward. The first three parts were groups of pictures where you had to find the different picture, the similar picture, and then figure out the relationship between the pictures and choose which additional picture would fit with that group.

This is where I ran into problems with the cheese grater. I should've paid more attention to "Sesame Street" when I was a kid.

After the third section was over, I asked my proctor about the relationship between a group of pictures of different kinds of animals. He explained that since the animals were all mammals, you would end up choosing the picture that was also of a mammal.

Oh. No wonder. And here I had been thinking along the lines of "They're all kind of fuzzy, you *might* find them all on a farm, they're kind of cute if you look at them the right way." Whoops.

The fourth section required you to make change in your head. I could hardly believe my luck. I'm a bank teller, so this was right up my alley. I know what you're probably thinking: Wait, she's not good at math, but she works at a bank? Well, I've never had to graph a parabola to give someone their change. Calculus is hard. Pennies and nickels, not so much - at least not in my case.

And of course, it wouldn't have been a Mensa test without a section of word problems of the "if Train A leaves Chicago at 3 p.m. going 50 miles an hour" variety. I made it through one problem, and then my brain locked up.

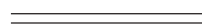
Fortunately, the sixth section was choosing synonyms with words instead of pictures, and then I finished with the questions about the story my proctor read at the beginning of the exam. If the word problems had been the last section, I guarantee I would still be sitting in that room, playing with my pencil and wondering why the little metal bit on the top was so shiny.

Did I make it into Mensa? To be quite honest, I don't know yet - I'm still waiting for my results. My mother, however, firmly believes I'm Mensa material.

"You make your stuffed animals talk, and you give them personalities, to the point where you feel bad about leaving them on the floor! And they always say that genius hinges on insanity."

It should be noted that I have a 7-year-old brother and a 5-year-old sister. A "talking" stuffed cat who chases imaginary mice with a plastic hammer (thank you, Fisher Price Tool Kit) can do a lot to stave off a temper tantrum. Mr. Stumbles - hey, it wouldn't be convincing to the kids if he didn't have a name - is a big sister's best friend.

So, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to take my stuffed cat, my inability to cook anything other than a Hot Pocket without setting fire to it and my stubborn insistence on wearing flip flops until there's a foot of snow on the ground and go sit out by the mailbox. Only time will tell whether I'm an eccentric genius or just a regular old nutball.



Sustenance for the Mind

by Julie Arsenault

[Initially published March 14, 2005 in *The Herald* of Portsmouth, N.H., all rights reserved (www.seacoastonline.com.)]

New Hampshire's smartest minds took a break Sunday morning to indulge in an elegant brunch put on at the Wentworth by the Sea.

Members of the New Hampshire chapter of Mensa got together for their monthly social meeting, the "Second Sunday Brunch Bunch" - one of the many social events where Mensans (their term for fellow members) from around the state get together to share ideas, laughs and a good meal. At the end of the meal, just to add a little more thought to the event, the members rate each meal and post their remarks on the New Hampshire Mensa Web site.

Mensa, primarily a social group, was founded in England in 1946 to promote intellectual thinking. The group is nonpolitical and free from any religious, racial or social distinction. In fact, there is only one requirement to join: You must have scored in the top 2 percent of an approved intelligence test at some point in your life and have the evidence to prove it.

Though this group prides itself on its accepting nature, the outside world is not always so quick to return the favor.

"My sister thinks all we do is discuss nuclear physics," said member Adam Smargon "and our continuous plans to take over the world, of course."

It is this misconception that leads most of the members of Mensa to avoid bringing their affiliation with the group up in conversation. "It's a conversation killer," said member Claire Natola. [*Editor's Note: I never actually said that, but c'est la vie...*]


Mensa provides various forums that allow its members to flex their highly developed brain muscles and feel comfortable doing it. "Appetite for Discussion" and the "Temperance League" are monthly discussion groups the N.H. chapter puts on throughout the state to allow members the space to think freely.

"This is where I get my mental stimulation," said Portsmouth resident Walter Wakefield.

In addition to its social activities, Mensa also raises money for various scholarships throughout the year. The most prevalent is MERF (Mensa Education Research Foundation), where members judge original student essays describing their academic goals.

Wondering if you've got what it takes to join? You're in luck.

A Mensa-approved test is scheduled for Saturday at Franklin Pierce College.

Test-takers beware: You can only take this test once. The N.H. Mensa Web site has practice tests that anyone can try. 





Local Kudos

Yes, that was John Lewicke of Mason, N.H. you heard on the March 28, 2005 edition of *The Exchange* on New Hampshire Public Radio! Senator John Sununu was the guest, and the topic was Social Security reform. Among John Lewicke's remarks to Senator Sununu: "I have been forced into this Ponzi scheme for my entire working life...I think that the only realistic solution is to allow people to start opting out, including people my age (57), and paying us back some of the money that you've confiscated from us over the years." John proves the point that while Mensa holds no opinions, Mensans certainly do! Good job expressing yours, John!

Dr. Fran Tishkevich of Manchester was featured on the March 30, 2005 episode of NH Public Television's *NH Outlook*. The segment showcased a public service announcement Fran made on behalf of NH Fish and Game about snowmobile safety. Sadly, Fran's son David died in a snowmobiling accident on January 2, 2004. The public service announcement Fran recorded will be used by Fish and Game in their snowmobile safety classes. We commend Fran for turning her loss into something that will assuredly save others' lives.

Joe Zanca recently submitted this news about his daughter Ashley, also a member of New Hampshire Mensa:

"When Ashley was a junior in high school, she received the Wells College 21st Century Leadership Award for being an outstanding female leader. The next year she won many awards and recognitions:

"Ashley was the recipient of the Miles Clark Scholarship for being the most outstanding student overall as selected by the faculty and her peers.

"In the State Salute to Seniors, Ashley (one of four students to receive this honor), was recognized for her overall achievements in academics, athletics, and community service. She was featured on WMUR Channel 9 for six weeks.

"She was recognized by the Governor of New Hampshire and received the Athletics and Academics Award.

"Ashley was also the recipient of the Community Service Award presented by the school board as the most involved student of the year.

"Among other recognitions Ashley won were the DAR Good Citizenship Award, the Creativity Award from New Hampshire Destination ImagiNation, the Eisenhower Scholar Award, and the National Creativity Award from Destination ImagiNation.

"As captain of her varsity cheerleading team (they were state champions) Ashley was chosen 2nd in the Top Gun competition for New England, and declared an All-American cheerleader.

"Ashley also volunteered for one week in Honduras building a schoolhouse in a remote village.

"This past fall Ashley started at Wells College in Aurora, N.Y. as a freshman. During her January break, Ashley interned with a local cardiologist for 1½ weeks, was hired as a substitute teacher, and taught at three schools in the Winnisquam school district."

Whew! Ashley, you make us proud! Keep up the good work!



Notes from National

MIND GAMES® WRAP-UP: One hundred sixty-five Mensans gathered in Tampa recently for Mind Games®. During the three-day event, members played and rated 51 board and card games. The top five games have earned Mensa Select® distinction and may use the Mensa Select® seal on their games. The winners are:

DaVinci's Challenge by Briarpatch
<http://www.briarpatch.com>

Ingenius by Fantasy Flight Games
<http://www.fantasyflightgames.com>

Loot by Gamewright
<http://www.gamewright.com>

Niagara by Rio Grande Games
<http://www.riograndegames.com>

Zendo by Looney Labs
<http://www.looneylabs.com>

Mind Games® 2006 will be held April 21-23 in Portland, OR. To register, visit <http://www.mindgames.us.mensa.org>.

MENSAGUMBO WRITING CONTEST: Here's your chance to share your thoughts and literary creations with your fellow Mensans! Following in Vegas' footsteps, we're holding a writing contest for MensAGumbo. Like last year, winners of this year's contest will be published in the AG program. Submissions must be received by the end of the day on May

15, 2005. Please send entries in .rtf format (articles, short stories, or poetry) and questions to Daphne Riordan at bythepen@yahoo.com, and be sure to include your name and email address. (If anyone would prefer to submit via snail mail, just email Daphne for her address.) You may submit as many entries as you like. There is no stated length limit for submissions, but of course there is a space limit within the program, so please keep that in mind.

KIDS TREK VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: You are so talented! You are so gifted! You feel inspired to share your expertise with others! You enjoy teaching children and their families! You are excited about being an integral part of the World Gathering of Mensa in Florida, August 2006. You believe that KIDS TREK at the Mensa World Gathering is an unparalleled opportunity for enriching learning opportunities. If this is an accurate description of you, please contact Martha Williams (marthafeld@earthlink.net) and offer your invaluable knowledge and skills to show the world how truly inspirational American Mensans are. We need artists, scientists, historians, politicians, authors, researchers, comedians, musicians, and so on. We have approximately 20 hours in which to offer to children and their families from all over planet Earth interdisciplinary, interactive, exciting activities about the United States of America. Don't miss this unique opportunity!



Editorial Ramblings

Claire Natola

In months past, I have shared with you examples of the many activities and special interest groups (SIGs) enjoyed by Mensans in other local chapters across the country. Dining events, game events, and discussion groups have been described; one can certainly expect to find these in almost every Mensa group. To wrap up this series, I submit for your consideration activity-based events, music/film/television events, field trips, and other interesting events that just can't be pigeon-holed into any category.

For physical activity, Metropolitan Washington (DC) Mensa has a Hiking SIG, while Cincinnati Area Mensa schedules a Monthly Hike. Minnesota Mensa has a Camping SIG, San Diego Mensa has a Yoga SIG, and Mensa of Fort Worth has a Swing Dance SIG.

Mid-American Mensa (of Kansas and Missouri) has a Jazzig, its members getting together to enjoy live jazz concerts. Metropolitan Washington Mensa has a SIG called Listeners of Classical Music, while Minnesota Mensa has an Irish Music SIG. Not only does Chicago Area Mensa have a Theatre SIG, but it also has an even more specific Gilbert and Sullivan SIG.

Movie events range from general to specific as well. Maryland Mensa has Second Friday Film Fun out at a popular cinema, while Chicago Area Mensa has Saturday Night Firsts, an event for viewing new movies on their premiere weekends. For in-home video viewing, St. Louis Mensa has a Comedy SIG, Boulder Front Range (CO) Mensa has Four-Star Movie Night, and Memphis

Mensa has the occasional Double Feature Matinee Monty Python Mania. Members of San Francisco Regional Mensa combine their love of a particular film genre with the art of group discussion into the Mystery/Suspense Movie Discussion Dilettantes.

Television events include Jets Football get-togethers in Northern New Jersey Mensa, evenings for watching episodes of the British classic *The Prisoner* in Metropolitan Washington Mensa, and a Chicago Area Mensa monthly event dedicated to a favorite of mine: *MST3K*. (For the uninitiated, *MST3K* stands for *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*, a comedy show where a guy and his two robot pals are forced to watch bad movies. It's their riffing on the films that makes the show.)

The issues of other groups' newsletters I have seen contained some interesting field trips. Maryland Mensa members went on a guided tour of Greenmount Cemetery, while Memphis Mensans visited a Nissan factory and took a Coors Brewery tour within a month.

One could say that Eastern Oklahoma Mensa's Shakespeare SIG is countered by Northern Alabama Mensa's Bad Poetry Night. Even specific hobbies get their due: San Francisco Regional Mensa has a Needleworkers' Night Out.

Lincoln (NE) Mensa has a Martini SIG, while San Francisco has a Math Lovers' Lunch. New Orleans Mensa has a Celebration SIG; it's simply a monthly happy hour, but they pick something arbitrary to celebrate, such as the 70th anniversary of Babe Ruth's final

appearance at Yankee Stadium, or the 59th anniversary of the introduction of the ballpoint pen.

But my favorite has to be Minnesota Mensa's Couch Potato SIG: "No traveling or expense for this one. Stay in your own home, sprawl or curl up on your own couch, and stare at your own TV (or book). Participation is voluntary, non-rewarded and taken at your own word - on the honor system." I love it! Maybe this one could go national...

Spring is here, and we're all eager to come out of hibernation. I hope these columns have inspired you to come up with your own events to host or SIGs you'd like to establish. Remember, if something interests you, you can feel quite confident that others in our chapter share your passion! And publicizing your event or SIG is as easy as contacting your Editor at 603-279-9986 or editor@nh.us.mensa.org. ■



On the Scene

Speed, Style, and Beauty: Cars from the Ralph Lauren Collection

by Susan Engelke

John Bauman ran a short article describing this event and offering four possible nights to view this exhibit. Intrigued, I replied and a friend and I were fortunate to join Claire Natola, Walter Wakefield, John Bauman, and Curry and Christine Bartlett at the Museum of Fine Arts on Thursday, March 31. Tickets were sold out; however, my friend sweet talked two free tickets and he and I were able to view this special exhibit of a special exhibit.

On the last Thursday of each month the hoods of the cars are up. Magnificent! It would be difficult to pick a favorite of these sixteen automobiles that are in perfect condition. One of the three 1938 Bugatti Type 575C Atlantic Coupes ever made was certainly a highlight. Then, of course, one would have to consider the 1958 Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa which is the first automobile to view as it is placed in the lobby of the West Wing. This is a must-see exhibit!

Second Sunday Brunch Bunch: March and April

by Darlene Alleman

We had brunch at two wonderful sites in March and April! In March we dined at Wentworth-by-the-Sea, a restored grand resort in New Castle, N.H. that is now operated by Marriott. The Wentworth offers an elegant Sunday Champagne Jazz Brunch. It's a little pricey (\$29.95 plus tax and tip) but well worth it!

The presentation was very well done, with ice sculptures and fountains surrounding platters of breakfast selections, oysters, jumbo shrimp, gourmet cheeses, fresh fruit and a myriad of other selections. Beverages were included, and the waitress made sure our glasses were always replenished with champagne and mimosas!

The Wentworth earned our highest average rating yet, at 4.78 out of 5.0. We had quite a crowd again, with 13 attendees from throughout New Hampshire, as well as a Maine member. We also had a reporter who stopped by, and interviewed members for a story on Mensa that was published in the *Portsmouth Herald*.

May 2005 13

Once again, we lost track of time with the company and revelry, and were politely asked to move to another area of the restaurant so the staff, who had already cleaned around us, could close up. Since we had been lingering for over three-and-a-half hours, most of us decided it was probably time to meander home.

In April we visited L.A. Burdick's in Walpole, N.H. Burdick's is a purveyor of fine chocolate, and they now have expanded their business to include a restaurant. With our group numbering 12 adults and 2 children, we were packed in a little too cozily until we decided to expand to another table.

We started with beverages, and the rumor around the table was that the hot chocolate was like drinking a chocolate bar. Every exclamation of delight from a happy recipient prompted

another order. The coffee was also excellent.

When it came time to place our order I had to get the French toast, which had a creamy texture almost like bread pudding and was served with real maple syrup. The other dishes were also interesting, with a fruit plate that included mango and golden beets as the vegetable with the salmon entrée. Unfortunately, the person who ordered the poached eggs was disappointed, as both the eggs and bacon were very overdone.

Overall, however, the restaurant was highly rated with an average of 3.83. The best part was the chocolates that came with the check! They were so delicious I had to go buy a box to take home. If you're ever in the area, definitely try to stop by. Oh, and get the hot chocolate! 🍫



Upcoming Testing Sessions

Tell Your Friends!

Information on testing and prior evidence can be found at nh.us.mensa.org. Anyone 14 or older who wishes to take the Mensa Admissions Test should pre-register with the respective proctor listed below, who can provide testing site information. The test costs \$30; a photo-ID is required.

Date	Location	Proctor
Wednesday 04 May 2005, 7:00 p.m.	Nashua, N.H.	John Bauman 603-673-9388
Saturday 21 May 2005, 10:00 a.m.	Weare, N.H.	Bill Alleman 603-529-4446

A Big Thank-You...

...to John Reuter of Retro Office Interiors at 186 Granite Street in Manchester for providing space for our March ExComm meeting! Retro has some amazing office furniture for sale at prices you won't believe, so do check them out. We met in the lap of luxury and were spoiled! Thanks again, John!



A Memorable Flight

Les Case

It was in the 90's, and I was on a flight from Tokyo to San Francisco, and the US, on United. I had made one of my flights to Beijing, and had stopped in Tokyo on my way back, to spend another delightful evening with my friend, Dr. T.R., the noted amateur horticulturist. As I remember it, I was seated in business class and I should explain how I got there. I had for years been making several trips each year to San Francisco, and the California wine country, on reduced fare coupons. I was logging up enough miles to get quite a bonus of extra frequent-flyer miles. I wisely saved these miles to travel to Asia, and the resulting flight allowed one stop on the way, so I chose Tokyo. Further, business class cost only a slight premium in miles compared to economy, the only problem being finding an available flight (a really big problem).

Back to the flight: In seats nearby were a 30-something mother and her beautiful, blonde (too blonde?) 14-year-old daughter. The mother seemed somewhat agitated, and ready to talk, so we struck up a conversation. I may have briefly discussed my trip. The mother readily explained their presence. Her daughter was a model (no surprise), represented by a New York agency (not one of the famous ones, apparently). And the agency had contracted for a "shoot" in Japan, with the mother accompanying. When they got to Tokyo, the client let it be known that the shoot would be far from Tokyo, and that the mother was not to be allowed to attend. (There are more rural,

and even secluded, areas in Japan, and even remote beaches, suitable for undisturbed model shoots, but these areas are far from Tokyo.)

The mother was adamant, she must accompany her daughter, so the shoot was cancelled, and the mother had called up the agency, and demanded that they be returned to the United States. Hence their presence on the flight, and that was that.

The daughter was a very quiet one, and the only thing I remember her saying was that she was glad that her mother was with her. That statement was made without emphasis or enthusiasm. She spoke almost wistfully, as if to indicate things on her mind. Her mother had saved her from an uncomfortable, almost dangerous, trip alone with men she did not know, in a country where she did not know the language or customs. But she had lost a large (multi-thousand dollar?) fee, and her modeling career had suffered a blow, maybe a large one. She was now to be branded as a difficult model. I had noted that she never exhibited any model-type personality, so she was trying to make a success on her beauty and youth. I have enough knowledge of the modeling profession to estimate that her chances of good success were slim, indeed.

The story is complete, and I have had no chance to follow up her career, not even knowing her name.

All the above is factual, not embellished in any way, and uncensored, this being New Hampshire Mensa. ■



Beans

John McGondel (7-04-1975*)

Overnight it seemed, the trees had enshrouded themselves in their orange and red overcoats. Fall had come once again to New England, a time of color, of fireplaces, and of kinship. But on this cloudy, windy afternoon, I felt none of those things. What I felt was alone. As alone as the very leaves that I watched, as they were being torn from that which had nourished them, only to then be swept away on unknown journeys, by an uncaring, non-judgmental wind.

In 1975, at twenty-one years old, I had already been married to my high school sweetheart (and still my only sweetheart) for three years. Observing others of my age group in mental turmoil, confusion, or in a constant search for themselves, only left me feeling more secure. I had no idea that those older than I, who knew me, were just sitting back, waiting for what they knew had to come.

Then came a strange series of events that, through contact with a seemingly harmless animal, were to bring me to a greater understanding of myself and of those I loved. A creature of the night woods, wild and beautiful: a raccoon.

Very seldom does any person's exposure to a "coon" go beyond that of a carcass passed on the highway, or an unseen nuisance at the garbage can. But to me a raccoon was to become an integral part of my transition to adulthood...

One day in March, I was sharing a coffee break with fellow employees, when this woman Marcia jokingly asked me if I wanted a pet.

Of course I was mildly interested and asked her what kind of pet: "A puppy, a guinea pig?"

"No," she answered, "A raccoon," and giggled. I froze. To this day I remember her face as she realized how serious I had become.

I was growing steadily more excited. It seemed that Marcia's husband had cut down a huge tree with a chain saw the night before and had unknowingly killed the mother of a family of raccoons living inside. Now he had four baby 'coons and wasn't quite sure what to do with them. Being an impatient person, I telephoned her husband immediately. Then I left work, picked my wife up, and drove the forty or so miles out into the country. And there they were, about eight inches long with scrawny three-inch tails. A strange yet soothing sort of purring-whistling noise radiated out from the basket. Needless to say, I fell in love with them and took two of them home.

My wife's cousin Paul took one, and was in a state of ecstasy with his, which he promptly named Pluto. Mine I named Beans and took him home. They sound cute and indeed they were, but nevertheless, they were by no means tame. It was a full week before we could touch them, and longer still before they could be handled freely and without apprehension. I bought a pair of leather gloves to hold them as we nursed them with baby bottles and warm milk (much to everyone's amusement).

For many weeks I was in a state of wonderment at my good fortune. Imagine a baby raccoon in my apartment, ten miles from Boston. At the time it

seemed like a small miracle, although now it seems more of a prophecy. It did not take us long to realize that 'coons are extremely smart animals, in many ways far surpassing dogs and cats. The closest I could compare it to would be a chimpanzee. If we opened a cabinet or door for something in particular, Beans grew to know why. His powers of association were tremendous. He quickly found where the trash was, even after we put it in a cabinet. After watching me once get something from the refrigerator he knew where the source of food was. He found the source of water in the apartment easily enough by following us as we refilled his water dish.

After about a month, Beans was fully accustomed to our house. And our home was accustomed to Beans. We had to "Beans-proof" everything. Anything not tied down had to be secured. More than once we were startled by the crashing sound of something in another room. But Beans would be under the bed, well away from the disturbance, just sitting there as if to say: "Well you certainly don't think I did it, do you?" He got into everything. He swung on the drapes, ate cigarette butts, even climbed into the aquarium. More than once my wife would open a drawer to the stove to get some onions and find Beans lying there blissfully.

Our world slowly began to revolve around Beans, and after about the second month, we stopped leaving him in his cage at night. Instead we kept him in a spare room. After the third month, he was firmly seated in our family unit. He was as attached to us as we were to him. Once he adapted to the leash, we took him with us everywhere. We would take him for a nightly walk about town and Beans was welcome at

all the shops we frequented. At the deli, the manager's eyes would light up at the sight of us three, and Beans always got a free handout.

We gradually changed our walks to the lake area instead, it having fifty acres of peaceful woods to walk through. These woods were teeming with rabbits, squirrels, birds, and other wildlife. People would fish in the pond, occasionally catching a trout or a bass. This made for many pleasant walks, and we spent countless warm summer evenings, strolling through the woods. Beans of course enjoyed this tremendously, romping tirelessly through woods and streams.

Any warnings that I felt, I shoved to the back of my mind with the attitude that these adventures would help the little animal to give vent to his wild urgings, instead of adding to them. I thought of those times in the woods as fulfilling a need in him, a necessary supplement to his life with us. I set reason and logic aside, trying my best to provide for his happiness.

Too many people had been telling me that raccoons get surly and grouchy as they mature, and that I would eventually have to turn him loose. I would shake my head, secure that Beans would stay with us his lifetime, which from books I'd read figured to be about fifteen years. And so as the summer progressed, I ignored the inevitable signs of restlessness that Beans showed.

It is odd that a person can rationalize just about anything if s/he wants to. When people would ask me what I planned to do when it came time to turn the animal loose, I would change the subject. When he wanted to go, I would let him. That was it. Or so I led everyone, including myself, to believe.

But of course I also figured he would never leave...

Without realizing it, I had become too emotionally attached to the raccoon. I think that my wife noticed this but said nothing. Likewise my parents. I played with Beans; I fed him, and shampooed him. We would read, or listen to music in front of the fire with Beans curled up with us. He also had his own favorite spots to relax, like up on the shelves on the stereo speakers, or on a warm radiator, as he very much preferred looking down on us from somewhere, probably from his tree-security instinct. He would lie there in apparent thought on his perches, sometimes for hours. He seemed to be watching us, studying us as he studied everything else in his life. Every single thing was of interest to Beans. He would investigate a single thumbtack or paper clip for many minutes at a time. Visitors were always thoroughly checked out before being accepted, after which they were seldom left alone. Beans would creep up and suddenly pounce on an unsuspecting hand or foot, latching onto a thumb or big toe, which he would try to drag away. And if the owner of the thumb or toe should try to apprehend the little troublemaker, he would retreat backwards in short jumps, his head to the ground, the rest of him all puffed out, just daring you to try to pursue him (which if you did try to do, would send him scurrying for safety, cursing you for calling his bluff).

Then it was rather late in the summer and we had had Beans for almost six months, during which time I had derived an immeasurable amount of happiness from his being part of our (childless) family. But Beans had been growing more and more restless. Much as I tried to ignore this, I was finally forced to face up to the reality. It finally got so we had to lock him in his room. Then it got to where

he would tear the room apart trying to get out. I thought of an article I had read where this raccoon had chewed its own leg off to escape a steel-jawed trap. I felt at a loss for an answer. I started letting him loose at night to roam our apartment, where, unsupervised all night, he was ruining our furniture and possessions. I still tried to ignore it, to shove it aside, telling myself that he would get over it.

But finally something happened which I could not ignore. One night when I came home from work, my wife was sitting quietly alone at the end of the sofa. I asked her where Beans was and all she said was: "Locked in the back room." Hesitantly I asked her why, and Eileen slowly held out her hand to reveal an ugly bite-wound. I stared in disbelief as she told me: "John, he bit me. I was only trying to feed him and he bit me."

I was silent for a minute, then said: "Eileen, honey, he probably thought you were stealing his food, even a dog would snap at you to guard his food. I mean, you can't expect an animal to lose his instincts. Especially a wild animal. He needs those instincts to survive. What chance would he stand in the woods if we took away his instincts? He would be defenseless." She just looked at me.

Then I thought about what I had just said. Beans needed his instincts intact in order to survive in the wilds. And in the wild was where I always said I would put him, when he chose to go. And wasn't he choosing it now? I sat down to think. I listened to the ticking of the clock's hands, and stared at the swinging pendulum. Finally I got up and went to the back room and opened the door to where Beans sat defensively in the corner.

"Come on" I said, my eyes hot. He resisted me, even snarled at me, but I picked him up. I rubbed his head and his ears and scratched his belly, which he

loved. Then I took his collar off. As I walked to the door I looked over at my wife, but she would not look back, and Beans and I left.

I walked with Beans briskly down to the pond and up into the woods, and there I stopped. Beans ran to the bushes and, without pausing, ran into them. I turned around and walked back through the woods. I thought I heard him scuffling behind me for a few yards, but I did not turn around. I just kept walking, faster and faster, until I was running; I ran all the way home.

As I walked into our apartment, my wife came over to me. I stared at her, my eyes overflowing, my face hot and wet. She kissed me and we just sat on the sofa, holding hands, not talking.

Friends came over still after that day and asked where Beans was. I just matter-of-factly said: "Oh, him? He took off." They would say that they knew this would happen. I just said: "Yeah, I suppose."

And so Beans the raccoon left us and I got to do a lot of thinking. About love. It is funny how love is. There are so many different kinds. Like the kind of love that parents have for their children. The same children who love them back, but still have to leave someday. The parents know this and try to understand it, even as their own parents did. But that does not make it any easier.

I thought about the two people sitting home at night in their house, alone. My parents. And I realized that although there are many different kinds of love, they are also all the same. Love is the opposite of selfishness, and after many years of life, and countless experiences, it took a ten-pound ball of fur to make me realize it.

And the wind still rattles the windows, releasing the remaining leaves from their tenuous hold on life. I look down the street and the air seems colder this year. And those reds and oranges are really not quite as bright as I remember them being last year. ■■

[*Author's Note: This story is the only surviving story written during my early writing years, and has been modified to fit into *Momentum*. It was written in 1975, which was thirty years ago. Now, my daughters, who were not yet conceived until almost seven and twelve years after this story was written, are leaving to start their own lives as adults. Eileen and I are now again in the position of where we were when Beans had to move out, but also in the position of where my parents were when I moved out of their house. Spring of 2005 has begun, and instead of the leaves of autumn, I now look forward to embracing the green leaves of a revitalized spring. I thank all who read my stories, and I fondly dedicate this rewrite to the Editor of *Momentum*, Claire Natola.]

Our Northeast Corner



...Maine, that is. And a mighty big corner at that! I would like to run a monthly article that calls more attention to our members in Maine, includes submissions from Maine Mensans, and heightens the awareness of all of us to what's happening in the eastern half of our chapter! Please send your submissions to Editor Claire Natola at editor@nh.us.mensa.org or 21 Hillrise Lane, Meredith, N.H. 03253.



Bits and Pieces

WERE YOU BORN BETWEEN 1961 AND 1981?

If so, then the GenX SIG is for you! The GenX SIG offers a wide range of events, activities, and forums germane to Generation-X. There is no fee to join, and we consider you to already be a member of the GenX SIG based solely on your birth date and your good standing in Mensa.

The GenX SIG has produced its first quarterly newsletter, *XcoMunication*, which is now available at http://genx.us.mensa.org/newsletter/XcoM_v1_I1.pdf.

All over the country, GenX groups meet for game nights, museums trips, hikes in the desert, pub crawls, and much more. Some of these events are covered in our newsletter. But it doesn't really matter what we do; the intellectual camaraderie is what draws us together. Please take a look and see what is happening with your GenX peers around the country, and see the changing face of Mensa.

[Editor's Note: See Testing the Waters on Page 28 for a notice about starting a New Hampshire/Maine GenX group!]

TWO NEW SPORTS eSIGs: The M-Football eSIG is a worldwide eSIG for soccer fans in Mensa. To join, send an email message with your name, city, and state to m-football-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. For more information, visit the group's home page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/m-football>. The M-Hockey eSIG is a worldwide eSIG for hockey players and

fans in Mensa. To join, send a blank email message to m-hockey-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. For more information, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/m-hockey>. Both eSIGs are open to Mensans from all nations; there are no dues or fees. For a full list of all worldwide Mensa sport eSIGs, go to www.esigs.info.

WANTED: YOUR BACK-DATE COPIES OF *Mensa Bulletin*, *Momentum*, and other national publications and newsletters of Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts chapters of Mensa. Also Registers, etc.

I will buy them for cash. I will pay \$0.15 each for any/all, duplicates included. More \$ for publications dated 1940s through 1970s. Copies will be preserved and used for good, appropriate future uses, and will never be destroyed.

Contact Walter Wakefield at 877-436-7250, see me at any of the many calendar events I attend each month, or bring to The Antiquarian Bookstore, 1070 Lafayette Road, Portsmouth, NH 03801-5408. Thank You.

FREED-M: INTELLIGENT LIBERTY is a group intended as a relatively nonpartisan forum for the intelligent, reasoned discussion of liberty-related issues, and how to pursue an environment of philosophically honest and consistent, practical limited government, and personal liberty. To subscribe, maybe even help make a difference, send an email to Freed-M-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.



Calendar of Events

May 2005

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
01 May	2	3	4	5	6 Temperance League	7
8 <i>Mother's Day</i> Second Sunday Brunch Bunch	9	10	11	12	13 Moveable Feast/"The Elegant Universe"	14
15 <i>Hit chhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i>	16	17 Pre-FSM Dinner FSM/ ExComm/ Business Meeting	18 North of Boston Dinner	19	20 Spring Mountain Climb	21 Spring Mountain Climb Central Maine Dinner
22 Spring Mountain Climb Fourth Sunday Lunch Boston Horns Big Band	23	24	25	26 Visit to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts	27 Appetite for Discussion	28 Backyard Party
29	30 <i>Memorial Day</i>	31	01 June	2	3 Temperance League	4

Calendar listings must reach the Calendar Editor before the first of the month prior to the cover date. It is NH/ME Mensa policy to avoid conflicts as much as possible, but no conflicts are allowed to group-sponsored events. Mensans, members of their household, and invited guests are always welcome at NH/ME Mensa events. Many thanks to our event hosts, without whom this calendar would be quite barren. E-mail your events to calendar@nh.us.mensa.org.



Testing the Waters

NEW EVENT: WINNEPESUPPER! The long shadow of CAVE-IN has morphed into WinnepeSupper. Beginning in June, on the third Friday of every month, a north-of-Concord dinner will be posted on our calendar. We will begin the odyssey on June 17 at Alfonzo's Italian Restaurant in Tilton. The arrangements have already been made by a Mensan who is willing to co-host. We are looking for someone else willing to co-host so that hosting duties can be swapped in case one or the other co-host cannot attend. Please contact Claire Natola at 603-279-9986 or editor@nh.us.mensa.org to express your interest in acting as co-host.

IDEAS WANTED: Donna Scott of western Massachusetts, intrepid host of the Fourth Sunday Brunch in the Brattleboro, Vt. area, would like some feedback on other events that Mensans would like to see on the calendar. One idea Donna had is visiting a butterfly farm. Please contact Donna at 413-628-0149 or scota@crocker.com (with "Mensa" in the subject line) with your interest in that event or to share your ideas.



LOCAL GENX SIG GROUP: Believe it or not, there appear to be no local GenX SIG Groups in Region One, not even in Boston or New York City! Let's show the rest of Region One that we are trailblazers up here in the north country! Denise Penkalski (penkad@alum.rpi.edu) of Nashua is interested in forming a local or regional GenX SIG group (see Bits and Pieces on Page 23 about the national/international GenX SIG). Email her with your interest!

Denise would probably use the GenX SIG's Region One Yahoo group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GenX-R1>) to coordinate a gathering. To join the GenX SIG, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GenX-Ms> and follow the instructions you'll receive. For more information on the group in general, please see <http://genx.us.mensa.org>.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT TO DO? We've had some talk about getting a group together for a New Hampshire Fisher Cats baseball game in their new stadium in Manchester. We've also bantied about the idea of heading up to Maine for an autumn weekend. Be sure to let your calendar editor (calendar@nh.us.mensa.org) if you are interested in these events, or any others you'd like to see on the calendar!



Spring Mountain Climb

20-22 May 2005, Woodstock, N.H.

New England has wonderful mountains. New England also has Mensa! This spring, we combine the two for a wonderful weekend! This is when the cold and ice have gone and the bugs have not yet arrived. This is the best time for wonderful hiking weather. The mountains are there for our enjoyment!

Our venue is Pembroke Lodge. Home base for many Appalachian Mountain Club trips, Pembroke Lodge is surrounded by woods with a snow-fed brook flowing by, with the Pemigewasset River a short walk away. It has country bedrooms and a deck, a homey dining room open to a large kitchen, a secluded sitting room, and a basement with its own refrigerator and shower. It also has a clock that each hour chirps out the sounds of different birds, including, of course, a Mensa owl!

The weekend is low-key and basically unstructured. The one major piece of structure is; you guessed it, hiking! We generally have two hikes. One goes to a mountain peak or other destination worthy of a good day hike. The other takes a few hours over easier terrain to reach a viewpoint, waterfall or other point of interest. Of course, there's also the 'null hike': a short walk or drive amidst the new leaves and flowers, some shopping, or relaxing around the lodge.

The weekend includes two nights' accommodations, two full breakfasts, Saturday dinner, and snacks and soft drinks (BYOB for anything stronger), for just \$60 per person. For Saturday lunch, the hike groups stop at a store for people to buy sandwiches and the like before heading out on the trail.

Once the sleeping spaces at the lodge, around 15, are full, registrations without accommodations are \$30. The town of Woodstock with a number of inns and motels is a couple of miles away. There are also some good nightspots in town.

We generally pick out the hikes on Friday night. The mountain hike leaves right after Saturday breakfast while the shorter hike leaves an hour or so later. As for the cooking and housekeeping, we do them cooperatively using a chore sign-up sheet, which definitely increases the feeling of closeness and camaraderie.

To sign up and reserve a place, send a check for \$60 per person to David Heimann, 149 Water Street, #5, Wakefield, Mass. 01880. You'll receive confirmation and directions to the lodge by return mail, email, or phone call. If you have questions or need more information, call David at 781-245-2087, send him email at heimann@world.std.com, or call Bob and Brendy Horn at 781-843-5581.

So there it is: wonderful weather, wonderful mountains, invigorating countryside, and Mensa friends, all in one wonderful weekend. Be sure to sign up early to guarantee a place!





Two Articles...

by Jim Werdell

The Electorate's Lament

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 230 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. ■

Mensa International: A 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 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. ■■

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