

Excerpts from the August 2000 MIND

The Newsletter of

[Central Indiana Mensa](#)

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Kudos to Pat Milligan for scanning, proofing, and formatting the web version of this issue.

PUBLISHING STATEMENT

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CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

MIND accepts contributions from all interested parties, with preference for publication going to members of Central Indiana Mensa. Contributions should reach the Editor's postal box **50946, Indianapolis, IN 46250** at least twenty days before the 1st day of the publication month. Materials must take the form of **legible written copy and/or camera-ready art. Please do not submit items on magnetic media.** Contributions may undergo editing for length and to eliminate patently offensive remarks, including personal attacks. The Editor must know the name of any contributor before publication; however, he will withhold that name from the public on request.

MIND ON TAPE

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This is Volume 35, Issue Number 8, August 2000

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MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

Counting Goodies

Central Indiana Mensa brought back a little loot from the AG this year. In more or less the order of presentation:

Our Culture Quest team, again captained by **Larry Marcus**, finished in the top twenty this year, resulting in eighty bucks and a nice certificate proclaiming the same. Helping Larry secure that award were his team members **George Dunn**, **Dom Jervis** and **Gary Peretich**.

Of the greatest personal satisfaction to your Editor was the Individual Achievement Award for Poetry garnered by limericist and decade-plus steady

contributor **Basil Wentworth**.

Ye Ed also picked up a plaque for the "Literary Facts" spoof of those nutrition panels featured on a few back covers. I may run it again so you can refresh your memories.

Last but hardly least, **Greg Crawford** was honored for his charity auctions with the National Chairman's Mensa Service Award.

Depravity on TV

Who's seen the latest In bathos on the tube: the "Survivor" shows which engineer social bonding for emotionally unhealthy people and then turn them against each other by dangling a prize? This is the sort of amusement concentration camp guards would enjoy.

To give us our due, or rather to vitiate our shame, the U.S. is not the pioneer in this revival of cruelty-as-entertainment: Britain and Japan have been airing similar replacements for bearbaiting for over a decade.

Oh, I grant you that nobody dies and all participate "of their own free will," but honestly, isn't the whole concept of deliberately corrupting group cohesion to exalt the power of money just a little vile? As though there were not enough broken relationships, cliques and outcasts in the world that the networks need to manufacture them!

If a Benevolent Spirit brings any good out of this, let it be that some of us recoil from this flaunting of the might of greed and set a higher value on our own bonds of affiliation.

State Fair Time

Even though it's still hot, when August comes we notice that the days aren't quite as long as they were in July; the year is drawing toward fruition and the Lughnasad, first of the old Pagan harvest festivals, is upon us. Now is the time to savor the gifts of summer, to swim and sip lemonade and attend fish fries and corn roasts and to spit watermelon seeds into the tall grass. Some of these things you can do at the John Matthews Memorial Corn Party, hosted once again by **Janet** and **Warren Ward** of Columbus, IN (see ad in this issue). The rest of you get out and see the State Fair, or if you can, a county fair. Or else do a little fishing, hiking or Just cloudwatching. Drive past the malls and find a small town drugstore that still has a soda fountain; buy a straw hat and a water pistol; eat an iced peach; watch a dragonfly. Wade in a stream. Build a sand castle. Don't forget your sunblock.

LOCSECTION

Grace Falvey

Many thanks for a job well done to the members of the Nominating Committee: Chairman David Vaprin, Larry Marcus and Sue Lasek. Their persuasive style

was used to recruit nine candidates for the new Executive Committee.

That's right, nine. Only eight names were reported in last month's MIND, but that was a mistake, and the mistake was mine. I misunderstood something Nancy White said, which led me to believe she could not see her way dear to serving on the ExCom. I then perpetuated this error by reporting it as fact to Dave Vaprin. In other words, I missed a golden opportunity to keep my mouth shut. My apologies to Nancy and everyone concerned, and my best wishes for the new leadership of Central Indiana Mensa, including Nancy.

* * *

While we are considering the makeup of the new ExCom, I would like to express my deep appreciation of the current group. Although being LocSec was not my choice, the other members of the ExCom have made the job bearable and sometimes even enjoyable.

Dom, Peggy, Karen, George, Marion and Adren, you are real professionals. You tend to business without tantrums or ego trips; you do what you promise to do; and I feel that you have been very supportive of my efforts. You also believe in using humor to take the edge off of prickly situations, which has saved the day more than once.

And let's not forget Dave A., who has formally left our ranks as an act of protest, but who still works harder for Mensa than hundreds of our dues-paying members. We can only hope he will see fit to return to the fold next year.

* * *

National Testing Day 2000 is scheduled for Saturday, November 11, which coincides conveniently with Central Indiana Mensa's regular testing day at the Haughville Public Library. This event provides a great opportunity for publicizing Mensa and attracting new members. Rush Washburne has agreed to serve as the NTD Coordinator.

* * *

By way of the MensaPhone we have receive a request for a chess player -- a non-smoking chess player, that is. Florence Leigh (pronounced Lee) wants to help her friend, a Russian woman, find a worthy opponent, and she hoped a group of intelligent people might include a chess player who would be interested. Ms Leigh can be reached at (317) 253-8550.

ExCom Elections Primer

Next month, September, Central Indiana Mensa selects its Executive Committee for the next two years. There should not be much of a campaign this time since there are nine positions and nine announced candidates (a tenth candidate by petition has withdrawn). Nevertheless, our By-Laws dictate that democracy will be served and we can't just declare these people in office, so next month all paid-up CI Mensans will find a ballot in their MINDs. To vote,

1. Mark the ballot with between 1 and 9 choices for ExCom;
2. Seal it by taping the edges together;
3. Put it in an envelope (you supply the envelope)
4. (This is important) Mark the envelope with your name and your membership number, and seal it. Do NOT put any personal

identification on the ballot.

(This envelope will go, sealed, to the Election Committee, where your membership and eligibility to vote will be verified. Then all the envelopes will be opened at once and the ballots mixed up. Then the ballots will be counted and the results announced.)

5. Then EITHER mail the ballot to

Roland Cook

1202 N. Gibson Ave

Indianapolis, IN 46219

- in time to arrive before the Monthly Meeting,

OR

Bring the sealed envelope with ballot inside TO the Monthly Meeting

(this saves you a stamp)

These instructions will be repeated in the September MIND.

LETTERS

More on Satan

To the Editor:

It's not particularly important that witches do not *believe* in Satan, certainly less so that they *declare* their non-belief; the question is, do they do the *work* of Satan? Demonic spirits do not present themselves truthfully -- they seduce the unwary in benevolent guises: "Aphrodite, goddess of love," "spirit guides," even "angels of light." Only the most perverse people formally worship the Devil, but the Devil's agents are always abroad, offering (and sometimes granting) "magical" powers in exchange for abominable behavior. Those who call themselves "Witches" or "Pagans" should not rest secure in the formula: "We don't believe in Satan."

"Sadie Thompson"

Automatic Weapons

To the Editor:

I read your July issue of MIND on gun control with interest. As with the general population there is a divergence of opinion. I want to state from the onset that I carry an Indiana Concealed Carry Permit and the weapon that goes with it. There is one fact that the anti-gun advocates neglect to mention: the states with concealed carry laws have lower crime rates than those without. In general the law officers I have talked with are in agreement with the system in Indiana. One told me he does not know of a case where someone has obtained a permit to hold up a liquor store.

In general it was an interesting issue. However, there is one statement in Dick Goodhart's article that is not correct. He states that private ownership of automatic weapons has been outlawed since the 1920s.

A total of 33 states, including Indiana, permit private ownership of automatic weapons, in compliance with federal statutes. This means that you are not a felon and have paid the federal government \$300 for the license. Massachusetts requires a state permit as well as federal compliance. Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota and Missouri restrict ownership to relics; the

other 13 states and the District of Columbia ban private ownership.

My source is the Traveler's Guide to the Firearm Laws of the Fifty States by J. Scott Kappas, 4th ed., 1999. \$12.95 with shipping and handling from Traveler's Guide, P0 Box 2156, Covington, KY 41012 or (856) 6747-5100 for credit card orders.

Ray Beam
Kokomo, IN

Dear Editor:

I greatly enjoyed reading the pros and cons presented in your July 2000 MIND. As always, emotions seem to run higher in the "eliminate them" than the "leave them alone" (4 to 2). I do have some comments:

To Name Withheld: The Declaration of Independence was discussing the wrongs the [British] government was visiting on the citizens. The "merciless Indian savages" were a vehicle of those wrongs, not a specific enemy.

As to the "Idealized citizen-soldier is no credible defense against it (war), I have one comment: Viet Cong.

On to Charleton Heston, et. al. and an invasion. Consider the Irish Republican Army. See the movie "Red Dawn."

Finally to the "subsistence hunters and Olympic shooters." Fine for this generation, but what about the next? How can one develop the skill to qualify without having the right to try in the first place?

Mr. Harper's issue was to make the weapon harder to operate, thereby making it safer when unlocked, unattended and unloaded. A harder trigger pull will make a weapon more unsafe, as firing will pull the weapon off target. Enforcement of this would be like that of New York's Sullivan Law: difficult if not impossible. Why should there be unattended weapons in a house with children?

Mr. Vaprin's position is for firearms to be regulated. More deaths are caused by registered drivers than by unregistered. Car have title (guns have serial numbers and federal/state purchase documents). Almost 10 percent of Japanese crimes involve firearms.

Mr. Dunn, I agree with you for the most part. However my answer to your first paragraph about the citizen-militia presenting serious opposition to a modern army has previous been stated: Viet Cong, IRA.

Mr. Jervis, I agree with the editor's comments entirely. Well written.

Mr. Goodhart, fully automatic weapons have never, NEVER, been outlawed. They HAVE been highly regulated.

Gun manufacturers taking over the NRA? Same way as Hand Guns, Inc. has taken over the Kennedy/Clinton clan.

As to you comments about the Militia and it not working well, we won in 1812, and won again in the Mexican War. No one won in the Civil War (620,000+

dead), however, it was first fought almost entirely with state or local militia.

My own opinion? I think everyone should be trained and armed. Israel seems to get away with it.

Gerald Fortner
Broward (Florida) Mensa
gfortner@juno.com

[Mr. Fortner's four-page letter was edited for space. He included many citations and quotes which are available on request. -Ed]

George Dunn, who happens to be the Editor, responds on a private point:

As one of those folks invited by my government to share their country with them, I hold a certain respect for the Viet Cong, but I fear that many people stateside confuse them with the NVA, the North Vietnamese Regular Army, who were a different kettle of nuoc mam altogether. The Republic of Vietnam fell to the NVA, not the VC.

MIND Now Available On Tape

Mensans or non-Mensan subscribers who have impaired vision may now receive MIND articles and some other features on audiotape.

Anyone whose low vision qualifies for free mailing (Postal Manual Parts 135.7 and 138) may send a blank 60-minute cassette to the Editor, POB 50946, Indianapolis, IN 46250) for a recording of the current month's MIND.

Individuals not qualified for free mailing may order an audiotape of the current month's MIND from the Editor for six dollars, which covers the cost of the tape and postage within the U.S.

Dear Mr. Dunn,

Enclosed find a copy of a letter I intercepted from our cat, Tia, to some strange feline we have never met.

Sincerely,

Beth A. Wells

Dear Artificus,

Did you hear that a newsletter, MIND, is going to dedicate an issue to us, the Feline Population? How nice to find that those human-folk have finally decided to honor us. Do you suppose that one of them has figured out that we're the Mensans of the so-called "Animal World"?

Alter all, if we weren't the brightest of the bright, why would so many of us choose to have Mensans for pets? I don't know about yours, but ours are really very pliable and responsible. They always remember to make sure there is food for my brother and me to eat and they refresh our water bowl daily. They can almost always be relied upon to be around for a quick scratch or tickle whenever Brody or I need one and usually understand us when we

request a taste of catnip. Being among the more intelligent of the humans, they were pretty easy to train and seldom get into trouble.

Have to tell you a story about my brother, Brody. Our humans recently received a box of candy from Las Vegas. There was a lovely, stretchy golden elastic around the box. Well, you know how Brody is around elastic . . . he ate the thing. Our people didn't notice it was missing until it turned up in the litter box, with proof that it had been through him! They were so thankful that his curiosity had not caused him distress.

Brody has our human male very well trained when it comes to our evening nap-time. My brother jumps up into the blue chair and invites our Tony to come and sit beside him. Tony follows the cues, sits down next to Brody and gently rubs his head and makes nice noises at him. Brody really gets off on all the attention. It is so very nice to have a human with such good manners.

Now, I'm rather partial to the male, but I have one game I play with our female. Every morning, before our morning nap, I get on the bed and bump our Beth gently on the arm. I'll fall over and allow her to tickle and ruffle my long, soft fur. She gets such pleasure from this activity, I sometimes let her do it for several minutes. She has a short attention span, however, and soon tires of the game. By that time, I'm usually ready for sleeping, so it doesn't bother me when she wanders off to do her human things.

Really, we have the household pretty well organized and are very glad that we chose Mensans for our human pets. We advise any cat worth its whiskers to do the same. They can almost understand us . . . and that makes life so much easier.

I must close now . . . it is time for our mid-afternoon siesta and I don't want Brody to get a head start. He snores!

Your Friend,
Tia

Petra Ritchie

A "Tail" of Three Mousers

Many summers ago, the man who lived in the other half of my duplex came to Indianapolis to work in the city during the week and spent every weekend back home with his family in the country.

One day, I noticed a white kitten hanging around on the sidewalk. I didn't think too much about it until, as time went by, I saw it outside more and more often, meowing pitifully and getting thinner and thinner. Finally, I couldn't stand it any more. I took her inside, fed her, and noticed she was eaten up by fleas, so I bought some soap and gave her a bath.

The man next door had brought her back with him from the country, so the next time I saw him, I said, "If you're looking for your kitten, I've got her and I'm keeping her." He voiced no objections, so I named my new pet Skinny Minnie, but as she soon filled our quite nicely, she became Minnie Mouser.

Two months later, I was visiting a friend of a friend who had a cat and a black kitten. She spoke very harshly to them so I asked her why she had two cats if she didn't really like them. She said she needed one to be a mouser, but would like to get rid of the kitten. I took the little black boy, dubbed Mickey

Mouser, with me, asking myself all the way, "Why am I bringing home a male cat when I already have a female? I can't afford to have them both fixed."

A few weeks later Shirley (then Sargent, now Washburne) was visiting and I was telling her of my unwise second adoption. She lifted Mickey's tail and said, "Not to worry; she's a girl, too." Sex education never ends!

Two years later I was at a meeting at Sue Ross' house. She had been looking for a home for a beautiful silver gray kitten. I made the mistake of admiring her (the kitten) and before I knew it, Mighty Mouser became part of our family. But not for long. Minnie and Mickey weren't too happy about forming a triad. When Nancy White lost her beloved 18-year-old Misty a few months later, we agreed that Mighty would be a happy "only cat" and an appropriate successor for Misty. After about 15 years, Mighty Mouser and Nancy are still a happy pair.

Minnie Mouser and Mickey Mouser lived to be sixteen years old, dying within weeks of each other. Their record of never having caught a mouse remained intact!

Eric J. Kollenberg

Remembering Geoffrey

It was a year ago tonight that his breath hitched and paused, and then resumed; hitched and paused, and the pause lengthened, and he didn't breathe again. I was shocked at the crushing wave of pain and grief I instantly felt, at the unfathomable difference between knowing that I probably had only a few hours left with him and knowing that I could never spend another instant in his company.

eighteen years

I had raised him from a kitten eighteen years earlier, a tiny, pointy-tailed, big-eared striped barn cat. He and his twin sister Michelle were my constant companions as he grew to a beefy 13 pound tom, and finally wasted away to half that. He never lost that goofy, clownish look, but somehow he always managed to carry it with an oblivious dignity.

People who should have known better said that he was more dog than cat. He fetched, came when called, and was devoted and social, but the way he expressed affection was 100% feline: exuberant nuzzling with nose, ears and forehead, accompanied by waves of joyful purring. He would appear out of nowhere as a sleeping ball of fur wherever a lap was available, and he was a master of coziness.

He was not a Mensan of the cat world, and he had a mischievous streak a mile wide, but he was the best-natured cat I have ever known. I think he genuinely loved everybody.

To this day, I still forget from time to time that he is gone, and see him for a moment in his sister. I can't believe that I will never again lay my hand between his front paws, rest my head against the back of his, work my chin into the soft fur behind his ear, and go to sleep listening to his soothing song. There will always be a hole in my life where Geoffery used to live.

Culture Quest News

April seems a ways off, but it's never too soon to be thinking about joining (or forming) a CI Culture Quest Team!

Central Indiana's "INDY 5.00," Captained once again by Larry Marcus, finished in the money this year - against some Local Group power-houses. All the more interesting was the fact that we played short-handed: four participants where we could have used five. Who knows how many more points that fifth person might have been worth?

Because the point scores were already published in the Bulletin, and because I'm trying to impress you with the tightness of the contest, I've taken a trick from the late Isaac Asimov and displayed the scores of the top twenty logarithmically.

- 2.1917 - Middle Tennessee's "Rocket Surgeons"
- 2.1658 - the "Phoenix Phive" and the "Rocky & Boulder Thinkle"
- 2.1430 - Tampa's "Culture Cats"
- 2.1287 - San Francisco's "Mental Giants"
- 2.1189 - St.Louis' "Arch Rivals" and Georgia's "Modern Prometheus"
- 2.1173 - Lubbock's "Grit for Brains"
- 2.1156 - Western Pennsylvania's "Table"
- 2.1055 - Mensa of Wisconsin's "Dream Team"
- 2.1038 - Greater LA's "GLAAMARAMA"
- 2.1004 - SW Idaho's "Guess Besters" and Cincy's "Queen City Quandaries"
- **2.0969 - INDY 5.00**
- 2.0934 - Tidewater's "Tsunami"
- 2.0864 - Nebraska-Western Iowa's "NWIM-Wits"
- 2.0845 - Metro Washington's "Cultural Norms"
- 2.0828 - Metro Washington's "Gordian Nots"
- 2.0810 - Montgomery Mensa
- 2.0792 - Plains and Peaks' "High Hooters"

As you can see, after the five strongest finishers, it's a tight field; only ten more points (0.0334 on the scale), and we'd have been in fifth place. Surely there's a CI Mensan out there good for 10 extra answers.

To Keep In MIND

Upcoming Gatherings and Events

*** 2000 ***	
August 25-27	Gemutlichkeit , Westwood Hotel and Conference Center, 201 N. Mayfair Rd. Milwaukee, WI 53226; (414) 771-4400; rooms \$67 (reserve by 8/1); Registration \$40 to 7/10, \$45 to 8/10, \$55 after; Elisa Weeks, Mensa of Wisconsin RG, _____, Caledonia WI 53108; (262)-____-____ email: registrar@wi.us.mensa.org
Sept 1 - 4	Rivers 3 RG , Clarion Royce Hotel, (address and telephone not available at press time), rooms \$62; Registration not available at press time; contact Betsy A. Hetzler, 208 Countryside Dr., McKees Rocks, PA 15136, (412) 787-5128 hetzler@telerama.com

Sept 15 - 17	Outdoor Gathering , Versailles State Park; Registrar Nancy White, 624 North Dearborn, Indianapolis, IN 46201; \$40 until 1 August, then \$45. 317-632-4747.
Sept 15 - 17	Peachtreat! 2000 ; Amberly Suite Hotel, 5885 Oakbrook Pkwy, Norcross, GA 30093; (800) 365-0659; room \$59, suite \$69; contact David Weinberger, 323 Rosewood Ln SE, Cartersville, GA 30121; (770) 607-9270
Sept 22 - 28	AMC Meeting ; Double Tree Riverside Hotel, downtown Boise; contact Diane Clayton dclayton@micron.net
Oct 15 - 17	IBD Meeting , Singapore; details www.mensa.org.sg/ifi/
December 1-3	The Reel Cincinnati RG [formerly Millennium Madness], Comfort Inn, 11440 Chester Road, Cincinnati, OH 45246; (513) 771-3400; rooms \$39.95; Registration Not Available at Press Time, contact Andy Badger, _____ Cincinnati, OH 45231; (513) ____-____; email: andybadger@aol.com

***** 2001 *****

February 2-4	Richmond UG , Holiday Inn, 5501 National Road East, Richmond, IN 47374; (765) 966-7511; early registration \$25; Greg Crawford, 8262 Sobax Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46268-1728; (317) 872-3749 or POB 50946, Indianapolis, IN 46250
Mar 30 - Apr 1	Grand Illusions , Ramada Inn Six Flags, I-44 and Allentown Rd, Box 999, Eureka MO 63025, (636) 938-6661; Registrar Ann Seward, _____, St. Louis, MO 63108; (314) ____-____; email: AJ1120@canoemail.com
July 4-8	North Texas Mensa AG (Dallas)

***** 2002 *****

July 3-7	Phoenix AG
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[new feature](#)

ASK RABBI LARRY

featuring the man with the simple answers to your complex questions . . .

Rabbi Larry Slashenburn

Dr. Slashenburn?

Call me "Rabbi Larry."

Huh? OK, Larry . . .

Rabbi Larry.

Rabbi Larry. OK, I've got this problem: every summer my brother and I share a cottage on Lake Wycklow. It's about a six hour drive and we usually take my van because Rick's car is new and the roads are pretty rough in places. There's four adults, our son and Rick's three daughters, plus luggage. The

kids are almost teenagers now and it's getting pretty crowded in there. We think we should rent a trailer for the luggage, but Rick isn't willing to help pay for it, even though it's his kids, the girls, who bring most of the stuff. How can I convince him to do what's fair?

You're letting a teenage boy ride in a car with three young women? Over rough roads? Into the country? What's the matter with you? No decent parent exposes their children to that sort of thing! Now listen to me: if you have a shred of morality left, here's what you'll do: you take your son and your brother up to that cabin and you leave them there, you come back and let your wife transport your brother's wife and children to the lake and then come back with your son and pick you up. On the way home, you do the same thing in reverse.

Rabbi, that would make thirty hours of driving - each way . . .

Did someone force you to lease that cabin? Did you decide to have these children? You can't just neglect your duties because they cause you a little trouble, I hope you realize that. You called me for advice and now you've got it. I can't run your life for you; you've got to start taking some responsibility for proper parenting, and Rick, this is just not it.

Uh, Rabbi, Rick's my brother . . .

Did you seek me out so you could quibble with me? Of course Rick's not my brother, but then MY brother isn't really the issue here, is it? By the way, you're not doing any of this traveling on the Sabbath, I hope.

Well, we do usually leave after work Friday, but we're not Jew . . .

So that's an excuse? Listen, if you're not willing to do right by your wife and daughters, I can't help you; all I can do is feel sorry for you, you sick bastard, and sorrier still for your poor family, who are going to curse you from their death-beds when they realize now you've abused them . . .

Well, I see we're out of time.

Rhoda Israelov: Upcoming Monthly Meeting Speakers

August 11 - So You Want To Be a Mensa Millionaire?

Join us for the Mensa version of the popular TV Quiz Show. (There won't be Vanna or Regis, but George and Rhoda will fill the bill just fine.) Match your wits against an arcane, esoteric and just plain weird question lineup. Prizes!

September 8 - Behind the Weather Report

Chris Wright, weatherman for WTHR 13 TV and WMYS radio will offer a behind-the-clouds glimpse of how weather reports are compiled, the use of lay weather observers, and how the local, national and world meteorological trends are changing.

October 13- Grooming and Tacking Bring New Hope to the Handicapped

Dick Peterson of AGAPE Therapeutic Riding Center tells wonderful tales of its unique horseback riding program for people with disabilities. A fascinating heartwarming program!

My Piece of MIND--Addendum

George Dunn

Your Editor received a remonstrance recently about using the redactor's opportunity to correct factual errors in contributors' texts, being advised to leave such emendations to the Letters page of the following issue. On reflection, I find some merit to this, although I can tell you it's a wrench to deliberately let mistakes stand for a whole month. Also, as I'm sure some of the readers realize, I use editorial remarks to even up the text on the page.

However, I'll tell you what: I'll do my best to resist the temptation to play the pedant, but that means you the readers will have to rush into the breach with your letters, otherwise I'll fall back into my sins.

B _____
A _____
S _____
I _____
L _____

by Basil Wentworth

158 - COUTURE SHOCK III Women's Wear

"The fabric is fine," ventured Jill,
"The design is an absolute thrill,
But the fit," she declared,
"Is as nothing, compared
With my husband's when he saw the bill."

"That dress is just you, through and through,"
I told her, admiring the view.
She gave it a fluff,
And Said coyly, "Sho nuff?"
And I answered, "They certainly do."

Though a dress's trans-gluteal tension
Is a subject I ought not to mention,
If it's suitably high,
It is certain that I
Give it pure undivided attention.

As a far from misogynist schnook,
I admire all the primping it took.
You may say, if you can,
That clothes don't make the man,
But they certainly make the man look.

The dowager's opulent frame
Stretched her dress till her bodice became
Almost rent asunder,
Which caused me to wonder:

Is that how "bust line" got its name?

* * * * *

As the passing years broaden my view,
I've observed (and I'm glad of it, too)
"There is many a slip
`Twixt the skirt and the hip"
Is an adage that's no longer true.

Rhoda Israelov

"Rhoda's Riddle" Yields Interesting and Arresting Results

Rhoda's Riddle at the July meeting offered clues to word, all of which ended in "sting." No fewer than thirteen members turned in answer sheets, all with at least the requisite seven out of ten answers, including **resting** (a sting that cures fatigue), **feasting** (a sting that begins to cure hunger), **dusting** (a sting that tidies your room), **jesting** (a sting that makes you laugh), **roasting** (a sting that cooks your meat), **rusting** (a sting that spoils tools), **interesting** (a sting that makes you read a book all the way through), **fasting** (a sting that some observe in Lent), **basting** (a sting that cooks are always using) and **toasting** (a sting that browns your bread).

Several alternatives were offered to some of these answers. For example, Alan Schmidt felt that **lasting** made him read a book all the way through and **crusting** browns bread. Kishor Kulkarni offered an interesting postulate, namely that **boasting** cures fatigue. "Carter Druze" submitted the **ingesting** and **tasting** cure hunger, **nesting** tidies your room and **boasting** and **blustering** make you laugh as well as **jesting** does. Pat Mulligan stretched the verbal point with **sombalisting** curing fatigue (perhaps he meant **somnambulisting**?) and added **fascinating** as making you read the book all the way through, and **frosting** as the thing cooks do. Len Beard "rose to the occasion" with **yeasting** browning the bread (Nope, don't think so.)

A's for effort and ingenuity go to Carter Druze and Jena Miller. Carter added these: **crestring** (a sting for surfers), **yeasting** (a sting brewers use), **roosting** (a sting at a henhouse), **beesting** (a sting at an apiary), **blasting** (a sting by dynamite), **casting** (a sting sought by thespians), **ghosting** (a sting career for writers), **thrusting** (a sting via saber), **lasting** (a sting used by cobblers), **wresting** (a sting by those who are takers), **pasting** (a sting a sting taught in kindergarten), **three-string** (a sting played by a bass guitarist), **coasting** (a sting important in luge), **posting** (a sting used by paper hangers), **listing** (a sting relevant to the census), **misting** (a sting practiced in hair salons and lawn care), **lusting** (a sting for Bill Clinton), **trusting** (a sting another sting for Slick Willie or a sting among friends), **boosting** (a sting for offering a helping hand), and **wasting** (a sting that harms the environment). Apparently Carter's creativity knew only the bounds of the paper I provided - hey, Carter, didn't you hear the speaker at all?

Jean Miller added **roosting** (a sting that chickens do), **trusting** (a sting that married couples do), **hosting** (a sting that Regis does well), and to cap this all off, Jean added **testing** (a sting that proves you're a Mensan).

In addition to the Mensans who added their own twists on the answer sheets, riddle winners are Larry Marcus, Shirley Washburne, Grace Falvey, Bob Thomas, Doris Thomas, George Dunn, Dave A. and Nancy White

Should there ever arise a need for my **attesting** and **insisting** that I love Mensa and Mensans for good cause, this overwhelming "Rhoda's Riddle" response provides enough for anyone **requesting** my answer! Thanks, M's, for the wonderful **assisting**, **reconsisting** and **twisting**! This was a wonderful **manifesting** of Mensa!

Newsletter Feedback: What they think of us

When MIND subjected three consecutive issues for judging in the 2000 Publications Recognition Program, we got back two nice awards, complete with plaques, *and* some written critical evaluations by the skilled judging committee. I describe their input as "what they think of us," because it's not MY newsletter (even tho' I got my name on the plaques), but OUR newsletter, and the advice is for all contributors and potential contributors, so here it is:

Four of the seven judges responded. **Judge "N3"** gave us "overall a nice job," thought Basil was "terrific" and liked the themes and especially October's "Spiritual Renewal" issue. On the other hand he or she thought we needed "more clip art or small fillers" to cut down on the white space. (Contributors take note: here's an easy way to get published). The judge liked both the LocSection and the Editor's page (blush) and described Bob Adair's fiction as "good but strange."

Judge "N4" loved the Letters and the themes concept, but thought we needed a larger font on the calendar and more "members" news (birthdays, anniversaries, welcomes to new members) and some puzzles and games, photos and original art. *Any volunteers?* Special note made of the Tantalus Ad, "Literary Facts," the Spiritual Renewal issue and Basil's limericks.

Judge "N6" liked the MINDBenders Honor Roll ("innovative and catchy") and the Bulletin Board. Described Basil's limericks as "brilliant and classy," the fiction as "unusual," the Tantalus ad as "good" and the Literary Facts as "brilliant." Liked the sans serif typeface and the original art with the fiction. Recommended more photography.

Judge "N7" thought we were "chaotic," but in "the positive sense of the word"; however, she/he criticised MIND for just "taking articles as they come in" (hint, hint, deadline scoffers) and our lack of personal features on local members. Curiously, N7 "didn't see any effort" to focus on a theme. He/she also advised us to *forego* clip art, create *more* white space and put more detail on the calendar.

That's the lot. As you see, sometimes one judge directly contradicts another but there was also much common ground. There seems to be a market out there for member-specific recurring material: artists, fotogs, birthday trackers, "Meet the Members" columns, puzzlers, games and contests; in short, lots of opportunities to get *your* name on a plaque in 2001

David Vaprin

Cats, Theologically Speaking (edited for length)

I lived with a cat for fourteen years, from kitten-hood until death, and it was not easy -- because I am allergic to cats. He was a replacement for a child's hamster that died while I was on a long business trip. By the time I came back and realized that cats and I should not mix, it was too late. Everyone was in love with the cat and it seemed best not to question who they loved most, the

cat or me? The cat, still a kitten, was a female the color of slate, so they named her "Dorian Grey" -- "Dory" for short.

But I learned a lot from that cat. I learned what most people learn, that here is a domesticated animal which retains a lot of autonomy. The cat loved people - when she wanted to. She also loved privacy, solitary vigils, moving drapes, warm laps and my bedroom, which she was forbidden to enter. She also loved to be brushed and vacuumed so as to keep down the cat dander. I would put on a dust mask and take the cat to my basement work-bench for its fortnightly cleaning. First I placed her food dish on the bench and then while the cat ate and arched her back, I brushed her and vacuumed her coat with a small, quiet canister vac. The experience was so sensual for the cat -- combining eating and caressing and brushing and elevating her hindquarters -- that I felt as though I was engaged in some kind of feline sexuality. Weird! There is no pet-owning weirdness that compares with some of the stories cat owners tell. It seemed help, though. Between the cleaning any my antihistamine tablets, Dory and I got along for her life-time. (Don't ask me to spend quality time with your cat, however.)

Dory's life was short, but she always seemed content. Her presence reminded humans that they should relax as well. While I am sure that non-primates are without self-consciousness, they do have inner states and can enjoy life, and animal suffering seems closely akin to our own. (I am no PETA member, but cruelty is another matter.)

I find that meditating on a cat's life raises theological questions. I wonder why cats exist. If God created all creatures then there must be a reason for cats, and would it be altogether different than the reason for humans?

The reasons typically given for creating humans surely do not apply to cats. In the Western traditions -- Jewish, Christian, Muslim -- people exist to praise God, to serve God, to reflect God's glory, or to become perfect like God. I don't see how cats can do these things -- but if cats are still worth having, I wonder why the human race wouldn't be at least as wonderful as cats without the praising, serving or reaching for an impossible ideal. In fact, I have never understood how God could possibly want endless praise or glorification -- in a human, that is pathological egoism. It doesn't seem a credit to God.

Consequently, I've taken the view that God's motive for humanity's creation was a lot like His interest in cats -- what an amazing show we make with our history, and what an antidote to loneliness it is to have humans around. Without humanity, the universe might be a bore, even for God. Like cats, we are predators, frequently dangerous to one another and the rest of nature, but glorious to behold, nonetheless. Thus we may be up to something theological when we keep cats.

Ember Skidmore

Why I Keep Cats

Those of you who have pets know that we don't think of them as "pets" but as part of our "family." Despite societal norms, pet relationships are pretty consistent throughout this country.

In Eastern Oregon ranch country where I grew up, courtesy required that a visitor greet all members of a household - human and animal - by name. Upon hearing his name, many an elderly dog or cat has come over to sniff my shoes

and lick my hand before returning to lie by the wood stove.

Ranch animals earn their keep. Our cat Blackberry would line up three to five mouse corpses on the back step every evening and yowl until my father praised him, saying, "My, aren't those BIG mice!" Then he would take them away and eat them under the sagebrush, heads first.

With thirty miles to the nearest neighbor, pets enable their owners to maintain their own humanity: it gives them someone to love. When I brought my cats into the nursing home where I work, a patient who was unresponsive (the staff thought he had "lost the will to live") for three days reached out to stroke Amelia's long fur. Then he tried to talk to her. We couldn't understand him, but he started improving from that point on.

The animals in my life help "ground" me, help me reconnect with the natural world. With all the emotionless "communication" devices in my life, it is the "little face in the window" of my cat, Puck, that welcomes me home.

My cats "tell" me when to head for the basement before the NOAA weather radio sounds the alert. They let me know when the robins are outside the bedroom window and when the bunnies are munching the lawn. I would miss a lot without my cats to alert me to the real world.

Why cats? Well, a cat can learn to use a litterbox in one day; a cat will wait for you to come home without making a mess. A cat can play "retrieve" (not "fetch," that's for dogs) and never slobber on the toy mouse.

Miss Starboard, my previous cat, (she had a twin sister "Port") would stroll two paces behind me without a leash, pausing now and then to mark her territory. She's ridden cross-continent with me, loose in the car, and has taken thirteen-hour plane trips twenty times. Not only was she calm, I used to let unruly children pet her "if they were quiet."

Man, I miss that cat. Some times she was my only tangible source of touch and love as we moved from city to city. I tried three times to get her a companion cat, but she wouldn't "share" me with anyone.

Cats won't come when called, unless they think there's something in it for them. They play with you on their terms, not yours. They are devious and aloof. Living with cats keeps my heart and hearth open, to someday share with another human. When I'm getting to know men, I'm interested in how children and pets like them. Those who can inspire the love of a child or animal are the ones I might want to make part of my "family" someday.

Cat Names I Have Known

Ember A. Skidmore

The cat names I have known tend to fall in categories:

- Condiments
Blackberry, Marmalade, Pepper and Colonel Mustard.
- Carbohydrates
Muffin, Biscuit, Cupcake Crumbcake and Noodle.
- Solid names
Toby, Charlie, Jeffery, Wyatt and Joe.

- Cats who resemble a namesake in personality
The Divine Miss M Kitty, Buster Keaton, Spock, Cisco Kitty and my own Amelia Earhart.
- Cats from the dramatic arts
Harlequin (Harley for short; she acted like a motorcycle mama), Spenser, Puck and Pluck.
- Weather inspired Cats
Snowflake, Snowy, Puddles
- Nautical Cats
Miss Starboard, Port and Landline.
- Spiritual Cats
Bast, Cigne, Ghost Spirit and Taboo (he lived in an apartment where cats were . . .)
- Minimalist Cats
Blackie, Whitey, Cat, and my favorite, "P&V" (my aunt's cat; his full name was "Piss and Vinegar")

Summary of Recent ExCom Minutes

(Complete minutes available from Secretary Karen Wliczewski)

May, 2000

- Treasury on 30 April was \$13,259.22
- Warren Ward agreed to host the Corn Roast 13 August
- August Monthly Meeting will be campaign speeches, followed by a quiz
- ExCom elections in September (MIND mails early)
- Scholarship funds (\$5,511.75) given to MERF

Fiction by **Dom Jervis**

Pure, Sweet, Revenge

The championship hovered before us like Tantalus' fruit. The score was deadlocked, no thanks to me. Categories on subjects I'd slept through in school predestined my nil value this round. It had been different earlier in the tournament, but this was for bragging rights, and the inquisitor had saved his most obscure, sadistic questions for last.

My teammates suspected another reason for my uncharacteristic quiescence. They may have been right. Abetting my taciturnity was an all-consuming internal Armageddon.

I looked at our opponents, my former teammates, and persecutors. They stood between me and utopia. I had so wanted to meet them for the title. Defeating them would rocket me toward celestial bliss, but losing to them would pall my soul, possibly for life. I had to laugh. I guess it's true: be careful what you ask for, because you might get it.

My teammates knew of my inner torment, the rage burning inside of me, threatening to digest me from my core outward. The vermilion haze that was the world at that moment meant it must have shown in my eyes. I had spoken little of the spiritual torture I had suffered. To do so would have smacked of

rationalization, though every word would have been the unembellished truth. Worse yet, discussing it would mean reliving it.

My early days "there" of sincere verve and enthusiasm were greeted with merciless condescension and public humiliation. My only motive had been to try to make a better life for everyone, and my naivete only exacerbated their glee in rending me asunder. My three years with them had aged me by thirty. All of my efforts were openly chastised, solely because our values did not mesh, making me not only unworthy of credibility, but marked. But that didn't stop them from taking advantage of me, goading me into an enormity of work and dearth of recognition on projects no one else wanted, with the mistaken hope that doing so would have gained me acceptance. Nor did it stop them from plagiarizing the very ideas they'd openly belittled and claiming credit for those which succeeded, including allowing me on last year's championship team. Yes, I owned a piece of their trophy, though they loathed admitting that fact. I wasn't even invited to their victory party.

None of this mattered. By now, I'd learned that if I didn't take care of myself, no one would. I had evolved into a Social Darwinist. Twenty-five years ago, I would have been appalled at what I would become, had I known. But my hopes of a life even vaguely resembling nirvana had long since passed. The wagon of idealism does, indeed, collapse under the baggage of reality after all.

The inquisitor paused, as though he would not proceed until he heard my alimentary tract seize shut. A correct answer meant victory; missing it would force over-time. As the defending champions, our foes would choose the category, and thus seal our demise. I didn't even know why I was listening. I might as well have been a propped-up cadaver. The question seeped through the blood-soaked aura enveloping me:

"What are the three chemicals used in a lethal injection, and what does each do"?

The audience, unanimously supporting our opponents, snickered. Despite their valiant poker faces, I heard the hearts of each of my four teammates bounce off of their livers. I quickly glanced over at my enemies. The smug satisfaction on their faces was unmistakable. They didn't know the answer, but they weren't being asked. Those God-dissing, America-hating, Communism-worshipping liberals were proud that they didn't even have a death penalty in their state. Efforts to reinstate it had met with a massive public outcry, led by these crackpots, similar to what occurred every time someone wanted to limit welfare or any other giveaway program which takes money from the hard-working, tax-paying people who make our nation work and gives it to every whiner, slacker or malingerer who comes down the pike.

I had often admonished my former teammates that it was folly to mistake one's own limited experience for universal truth. Fools! They were too busy pondering their own acceptance speeches to see life return to my eyes. At last, I would prove I had been right all along. I looked at our captain, smiled, and nodded. His eyes grew thrice normal size and his jaw threatened free fall. Normally, he was the only one to answer, after consultation. It was our deferral of status to him, done out of respect, another concept foreign to the Comrades across the room. This time, he motioned for me to proceed. A rare honor, but no doubt he understood. I was poised to ram the dagger through their bloated egos and he seemed content to simply watch their demise at my hand.

I looked toward the inquisitor and nodded again. He asked for the answer. I was only too happy to oblige:

"Sodium pentathol renders the person unconscious. Pancuronium bromide paralyzes the lungs. Potassium chloride stops the heart."

The precious moment of silence was frozen in time, and will remain intertwined with my soul for all eternity. The inquisitor smiled. Our opponents looked at him in abject horror as if to say, "Please, let him be wrong!" The stunned crowd knew what our adversaries were trying to deny. My confident tone meant their fate had been sealed.

The inquisitor gestured toward me and spoke volumes with one word, "Game!" I bit my lip until I thought it would hemorrhage, trying to suppress my glee. One task remained. I had to shake the hands of those who had tried to demonize me as the vermin of the planet. I did it, though the whole time my hand touched theirs I could taste my own spleen. My team-mates let me go first, so I could sprint through this perfunctory, completely meaningless charade and leave. As I crossed the room, fifty pairs of eyes clung to me. Half were amazed, the other half were furious. I was so intent on getting the final chore over with and vacating the room that the words of the inquisitor barely registered:

"The final score is: Central Indiana 8; South Sagitch, Maine 7. Congratulations to the new National Mensa Bowl Champions!"

(The author wishes to thank Anna Graham for her assistance with this story.)

Random Sample
© by Julie A. Yates Harkey

Cat Gallery

Spook is the black blob in this picture, and Indy is the pretty stripey one. Spook is notorious for his dumb tricks, which are interspersed with lots of sleep. The cats sleep in the garage at night, and have to come through a cat door to get into the kitchen. Spook has grown so fat that he has trouble squeezing through. Just lately, especially first thing in the morning, he squirms through the cat door as fast as he can, then takes off at a dead run. Yesterday he got going so fast that he ran into the louvered doors at the end of the hall. I have no idea where he thought he was going.

Indy is our greeter. He's all over visitors, rubbing and pawing to get attention. If you ignore him, he may goose you. Indy has just finished taking a drink from the fish tank. He may look guilty--I think he's just wondering what the heck I'm doing with that clicky black box in my hands. The only reason we keep the goldfish tank is for the cats, it's their water bowl. Yum, fish-flavored water. It works well, the carp keep the tank clean and they don't get neurotic about all the cat traffic.

This is a picture of me mud-wrestling with lion cubs. The big one knocked me down, then his little brother licked me on the neck. Scratchy tongue!

BULLETIN BOARD

Petra Ritchie:

Glee and Sympathy

If you know of a Mensan who has

Shirley Washburne:

National Trivia Network

Rookie's Sports Pub, 10th and

suffered a setback **or** who has something to celebrate, (*especially* to celebrate) please contract Petra with the information; she will send a card on behalf of the Local Group.

(address and phone # deleted for web page)

pritchie@ibj.com

Country Club Road

Call 839-9282 for details.

Joseph Zanca: After seven years, the Mensa Membership Directory is being revised! The 1999 edition will be available in late September from the Mensa Boutique. Order by credit card at 1-800-MENSA4U. \$30.

Nancy White: *Good Homes For Your Used Books!* I still need used books in good condition for the Monthly Book Sale. Proceeds go to the Special Projects Fund.

Marie Beltrame: I miss my friends in Central Indiana Mensa! Even though I am now far away in real distance, won't you keep in touch with me in cyberspace? Either MarieBeltrame@juno.com or Beltrame@fls.infi.net

YOUR NOTICE HERE

Later, the Tuscarora George Dunn

My Cats

I never actually owned but one cat, a pale gray with the not too original name of Smokie. The poor little fella died young and I didn't venture into full feline ownership thereafter.

But after the fashion of the cigarette addict who never buys but bums from friends, I derive much pleasure from Other People's Cats.

My family came late to the joys of catsmanship, being from the start "dog people" and cherishing the myth of natural antipathy between these distant cousins of Order Carnivora. (evolutionarily speaking, the cat family is Eurasian and the dog-bear family American; intermittent land bridges over the last few million years allowed both groups into each other's ancestral territory.)

I'm not even sure how we acquired our first cat, Ramses, but I do remember how no one expected him to last a day once Old Pro, our shepherd-collie mix, got in sight of him. That's very nearly what happened, too: Pro and the cat spotted each other through a dining room table and the trestles slowed the dog up just enough for us to intercept him.

Then a myth-shattering event occurred. The two were only forcibly separated for a day while the cat's scent got through the house, when Pro's canine brain made a paradigm shift. This ruthless foe of all things fells suddenly and indisputably told himself, "Wait a minute. I believe this is MY cat!" because from then on Pro not only tolerated Ramses but enthusiastically defended him from his fellow dogs.

The ice broken, and with Pro's approval, we thereafter adopted other toms and

pusses, becoming local pioneers in the matter of dog-and-cat households, a concept once held as strange as Interracial marriage.

Ramses, a big gray tiger, was our most memorable cat, through not the nicest, as he was born feral and never really lost his savagery. True to his pharaonic namesake, Ramses loved to brawl. Once he picked two dogs for opponents (Pro wasn't with us) and I, thinking he was outmatched, decided to rescue him. When I picked him up, the ungrateful hairball split my lip wide open. I briefly considering returning him to the mongrels, but instead I tossed him onto the safety of the garage roof, to the frustration of all concerned combatants.

Of much calmer disposition was Pepper, a pure white critter my sister "liberated" from a laboratory. She saved him from a brief life of disease and dissection and darned if he didn't seem to know it. Cats aren't traditionally grateful, but I wouldn't try to prove it by Pepper.

There were Sooty and Pokey and Calliekit and Alice and Henry and more. All these have now passed, usually in the best comfort that veterinary science could offer, the short lives of domestic animals, but my mother and sisters all keep cats (and dogs) to this day. Notable among the current crop is Sassafra, a foundling who, so help me Hannah, follows my nieces to the bus stop in the morning and waits for them there in the afternoon and polydactylic Dory (for "Adorable"), who manifestly believes the two highest achievements of human civilization are the self-cleaning litter box and the laser pointer.

MINDBENDING HONOR ROLL - 2000

[H = Host]	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dave A.	♥	♥	♥	♥		♥	♥					
Alison Brown				♥H								
Rocio Carrasco			♥									
Greg Crawford		♥	♥				♥					
Janette Greene Dollar	♥											
George Dunn	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥					
Marcele Everest	♥H		♥H				♥H					
Grace Falvey			♥									
Carol Gould						♥						
Marion Harcourt	♥				♥H							
Jud Horning	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥		♥					
Jerry Hunter		♥										
Rhoda Israelov						♥H						
Dom Jervis		♥		♥	♥		♥					
Lori Levine					♥							
Larry Marcus				♥								
Treva Marks		♥H				♥						
Bob Thomas	♥											
Doris Thomas	♥											
Nancy White	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥						
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
