

Excerpts from the July 1998 MIND

The Newsletter of

[Central Indiana Mensa](#)

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PUBLISHING STATEMENT

Central Indiana Mensa, a Local Group of American Mensa Ltd., publishes MIND monthly. Mensa, a not-for-profit organization open to all persons scoring in the 98th percentile on a standardized intelligence test, neither endorses nor opposes the opinions reported in MIND, which remain those of the individual contributors.

MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

Techno-peonage

LocSec Rick sent me a letter today, transmitting the instructions of a member of the professional staff to clean up the "Names to Mind" listing. Seems Julia Lilly reads **every** newsletter's organizational pages **every** month and compares them to the national database for lapsed members. Don't know what Dave Remine pays her for that, but it's probably not enough. The part of this service that I thought newsworthy was Rick's comment that, "She emails me ... because *you don't have an email address.*" [italics mine]

Note that Rick's possession of an email address, and the required personal computer, makes him as valuable an intermediary to the national office as Sacajawea was to Lewis & Clark ("Let's take her along because none of us speaks Shoshoni."). It is actually deemed more expeditious for national to send Rick an email so he can send me a letter than it would have been for national to send the letter directly to me.

It is true I have no email or computer, yet I have a fully functioning telephone as well as a postal box - maintained at great personal expense - to link me to the world beyond the sound of my voice.

Please don't think I'm abusing Julia here; the tedium of her task must be substantially relieved by the convenience of electronic mail; requiring her to abandon it to send "snail mail" would be like asking someone with a freezer full of microwave dinners to pluck, dress and stew a chicken.

What alarms me is the rapidity with which such techniques are becoming forgotten arts, like water-witching or TV repair. As some of you know, I still write letters with a pen and nearly every new correspondent remarks, "Wow! Did you do this?" as though to suggest that I had performed a feat equal to finding a fifth root without a calculator.

Occasionally potential contributors (bless their hearts) will tinker up an article on their PCs and blithely ask me to download it. Half the time they deal with the shock of "no es posible" by asking where to send the disk or fax the hardcopy. It's a resourceful nerd (I mean that in the nicest sense) who finally

realizes, "I guess I could Print it Out, and, uh, you know - mail it."

The Information Age is clearly upon us and many of its beneficiaries act as though earlier modalities have become extinct. A man without a modem is as thoroughly isolated as a disabled person at a restaurant who customarily hears the waitstaff ask his companion, "What will your friend be having?"

The day will probably dawn wherein I'll purchase a PC and all its peripherals, but as I belatedly occupy my situs on the great reticulum, I hope I'll remember in time of need how to write in cursive, light a stove, dial a telephone, change channels without a remote, use a double-edged razor blade, load film on a projector, remove a bottle cap with a scout knife, pierce a can with a "church key," post a note that doesn't have stikum on it, tie a shoelace, tune a radio, position a fan for cooling, empty an ice tray, swat an insect, cut grass with a reel mower, start an outboard motor with a pullcord, lay a fire, pop corn without a microwave...

B _____

A _____

S _____

I _____

L _____

by Basil Wentworth

Verse and Worse

The mailman's concern with the plight
Seem less of discomfort and fright
He was heard to remark,
"I hope he won't bark --
I know his bark's worse than his bite."

An aging policeman named Pete
Said beat-pounding flattened his feet.
"And what's even worse,
He went on with a curse,
My barracks are worse than my beat."

The fisherman said, "I just hate
The smell of the stuff. Why, of late,
The bait has a smell
Like the odors of hell,
And the bark's even worse than the bait."

"Though it's bad enough while we're afloat,
The fisherman when out to note,
"It offends even more
When we get to the shore
Since the bank is still worse than the boat."

Al staving young poet was stuck
In an unending run of bad luck
To attain approbation
(And stave off starvation)
His verse can be bough for a buck.

* * * * *

But give the poor dog his due:
You'll admit, if you think it through,
That his bark and his bite
Are irrelevant, quite --
If he only whines at you.

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