

# Excerpts from the June 1999 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.

## 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.

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## MIND STAFF

**Managing Editor:** George Dunn, PO Box 50946, Indianapolis, IN 46250

**Calendar Editor:** [Marion Harcourt](#)

**Proofreader:** Rhoda Israelov

**Publisher:** Nancy White

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## MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

### Contributors' Woes

Well, you probably didn't hear it here first, but be careful what you wish for. Seems that a couple of contributors have agreed that there is a topic worth writing about - that the editor is too authoritarian!

Round Three on this contention appears on the Letters page of this issue. I must confess to a degree of perplexity about it, inasmuch as it specifically supports Teresa Fisher's [April '99] letter claiming that the current editor (moi) is the source of the oppression while specifically exempting the current MIND staff (pretty much moi again) from critique, assigning the tyrant's mantle to former editors.

I wonder if we don't have a case of principle vs. application confusion here, similar to the ones involving "peace," "freedom," "life," and "right." Everybody agrees that these things are good, but each person applies that goodness to a slightly different set of circumstances.

In parallel mode, we all react negatively to talk of "censorship," "suppression" and "deforming" but rarely concur on just what constitutes such abuses.

Debates carried out on the abstract plane tend to escape resolution, so before the issue of editorial oppression becomes another running battle (which I do not intend to restrict just to spare myself criticism), I thought I'd lay out a few particulars of editorial policy so contestants can at least enjoy the opportunity of informed assessment.

1. The most crippling burden a contribution can bear is excessive length. The optimum size is 500 words (one page) and next-best is 1,000 words (two pages). As this very issue will show, allowances can be made, but this is the ideal. The sticky part is not so much the mere volume, but the placement; a 700-word article requires a full page plus a third of another page, which means that page requires something to fill the remaining two-thirds of it, and since a page is one-quarter of a sheet of paper, it can become a choice among cutting, not running or finding 3 2/3 additional pages of material. Teresa's stuff frequently got set aside because it was 4 to 5 times the recommended length.

2. The Number Two sin is plagiarism. This comes up quite innocently most of the time, with the unfortunately inadequate attribution, "Found on the Net." Sorry, folks, but intellectual property rights do not vanish just because one party breaks the chain of custody.

3. Really vitriolic language can provoke the editor's blue pencil. Admittedly, this is an area of judgment, but as a rule of thumb, don't write the sort of things about people you wouldn't if we still had duelling.

4. Rarely will I tinker with an author's words just to improve their literary value. However, where other problems appear, I may condense truly periphrastic pleonasms to fit the page. If you doubt I run into such, I can show you samples.

5. Proofreading seems to have a bad rap. If I'm embarrassed at anything, it's that so many typos get by me, not that I protect my contributors from the occasional fat-finger faux pas.

6. So far, no one, regardless of how much he or she believes it, has been "censored" for espousing an unpopular opinion, as long as it was done in a civil way, so just get over this one.

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## LOCSECTION

### Grace Falvey

While the annual get-together for new members is designed to welcome recently affiliated Mensans to the group, it often provides an opportunity to visit with "old" members whom one does not see otherwise.

Such was the case at my house on April 25 when, in addition to meeting some delightful new recruits, I got to meet a man whose work I have admired for a long time: Basil Wentworth. (My admiration is far from unique; everyone who met Basil that day complimented him on the verses he writes for the MIND.)

Basil and I have two things in common. We're both word freaks and we share a birthday (September 17). It seemed inevitable that we would cross paths one day, but I never dreamed it would be on my own doorstep.

Possibly inspired by the beautiful weather, Basil and his delightful wife, Jocelyn, drove up from Bloomington for the party. Their stories of living abroad in several different countries added a cosmopolitan touch to the conversation.

We were, in fact, quite a well-traveled group. One of the new members, Angelika Kraft, attended the party with her husband. Their home is in Germany, but they are living in Indianapolis for a time to work at Eli Lilly & Co. Another new member, Greg Eldred, brought his girl friend, a flight attendant based in Los Angeles. For such a diverse bunch of guests, they didn't seem to

have a bit of trouble finding things to talk about. But I guess that's one of the great things about Mensans.

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## LETTERS

Dear Editor:

As a former contributor to MIND, I feel I must finally express my views after seeing the debate about scanty contributions. I agree completely with Teresa Fisher, and applaud her refreshing honesty and courage in speaking up about overly critical editing. At one time the newsletter was a relaxed and friendly publication which did not take itself too seriously, yet won several awards, as I recall. Frankly, I enjoy seeing what my fellow Mensans have to offer in the original form, not doctored up to suit an editor or proofreader. Usually those who do submit articles and such create a well-done, if not always perfect, final product. I prefer the real thing, warts and all, especially since sometimes the warts and [sic, webmaster] only in the eye of the beholder, and not actual. I want to see the personality of the author between the lines, not some highly polished final product doctored up by those who may not actually have a clue as to what the author actually had in mind, though, of course, they think they do. This is NOT a slam at the present editor of [sic, webmaster] staff, because I have not interacted with them and don't have knowledge of how they are to work with, but I am aware that the editorial policy in the past became pretty heavy-handed, and the newsletter lost contributors because of this. Dom Jervis, no doubt, means well in his response to Ms. Fisher. I simply don't agree. With so many outlets for creative individuals, why endure the practices of an overly zealous editorial crew. Sometimes giving up IS the answer.

Nancy Ashbaugh

*[O.K., that's three counties heard from; anybody else wish to weigh in on this overly zealous editing business? -Ed]*

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## Dom Jervis

### Animal Rights

Animals have no rights, and they shouldn't. Human beings are the highest form of life on our planet. Animal-rights activists often wail about so-called atrocities involving the testing of substances on animals before they are tried on humans. If such testing saves even one human from unnecessary suffering, then it should occur. It is better to sacrifice the skin, eyes, or even the life of a rat or rabbit to avoid any potential harm to a human being.

Testing on animals has kept harmful make-up, ointments, and other substances off the market, where they could have harmed you, or your child. In addition, such testing has been invaluable in the development of vaccines which have saved many lives. Animal-rights activists conveniently "forget" to mention these points.

animals were born for the sole purpose of making a mink coat
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This does not mean I am in favor of cruelty to animals. Laws already exist to punish those who do so for superfluous reasons. However, a person wearing a

mink coat should not be subjected to assault with red paint, which happens all too frequently. The animals used in the coat were born for the sole purpose of making it.

Animal-rights activists do not seem to care if hundreds of loggers lose the means to feed their families, as long as the homes of the poor little spotted owls are spared from the evil woodsman's ax. This is yet another example of liberal *sans-culottes* taking a benevolent concept and extrapolating it to an illogical extreme.

The worst thing about these people is that they have no qualm about using *ad misericordia* tactics against those who would not support their cause ("Since you won't donate money to our foundation, does that mean you are in favor of all those cute little baby seals being clubbed to death for their fur, like they are in these pictures? Is that what you want?!") Their use of blame and guilt to extort money from hard-working, frugal people who make this country work is absolutely unconscionable.

I also find it rather perplexing that the animal-rights activists would rather let a deer die slowly and painfully in Brown County State Park from starvation due to overpopulation, than swiftly from a hunter's bullet or arrow.

The ASPCA, Humane Society and PETA have as much right to their opinions as does anyone else. However, they have no right to use the skewed demagoguery and other terrorist tactics which have become their standard procedures. They only do so because using the fair, objective truth would work against their interests. Exposing these hypocrites would diminish their membership, funding, and clout.

I am often forced to wonder if liberals actually hate America. Their passel of principles contrary to those which made our country great certainly indicates that they do. Rather than try to solve our nation's true problems, they opt to contrive crises, or blow less-than-important nuisance out of proportion. The inane diatribes of liberals regarding animal rights are yet another example of how they would prefer to be part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

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## Petra Ritchie

### "MY PETS" or "All About the More Hairy Members of my Family"

Mamie is a short-haired, 15-year-old, female, brown, too-smart-for-her-own-good (sound familiar?), dachshund. When her family could no longer keep her, I adopted her at age 3 1/2. Talk about a Mensa-pet! When her water bowl is empty, she goes to the *sink* and barks! When you toss her ball and she loses track of it, just point and she'll find it by following the direction of your finger! If she wants you to join her, she gets on the bed/chair/whatever and barks till you come! Once I put her in her cage and forgot to latch it, so she gave the door a push (which she never does when it's latched) and walked out. However, just like an intelligent child, she thinks of all sorts of trouble to get into. She recently unsnapped, not once, but twice, the treat compartment of her carrier and ate all of the contents. At least there wasn't a peep out of her the whole 3 1/2 hour triop! She loves to go for a walk, which is why she always poops in two installments - she knows that she will get to stay out that much longer!

I found Wally, a long-haired, male dachshund, six years ago wandering around

at a neighborhood garage sale (on Wallace Street, get it?). I admired him, and was told that someone had dumped him early that morning. I took him home and he's been the love of my life every since. This dog is perfect - he has NO bad habits. He leans toward Densa-ness, but this endears him to me that much more. He's as undemanding as Mamie is demanding. He's handsome, funny and very loving. I could go on and on...

About a year ago, Buddy, a blond, mostly chow, now about three-year-old male, was hanging around a neighbor's farm down the road from my place in the country. She called me because I had mentioned getting a large dog "some time" to keep Terry company on his many weekend walks through the woods. The little ones don't do too well in the underbrush. We went down the road to look him over, and hesitated to get out of the car, he looked so mean - mangy, skinny, what looked like fight scars all over his face, and an abscess that made one cheek hang down. The neighbor said she'd have to take him to the pound because she already had all the dogs she needed. I told Terry, "This dog is going to die. Who would adopt something that looks like this?" We took him home and guess what? He's wonderful, too! good nutrition turned him around; he's a fine specimen now. He's very good-natured, a great watch dog (but barks only for good reason) and LOVES the country. We bring him home to Indianapolis with us during the week, and he is thriving there, as well. At the condo complex Terry takes him on a several-mile long walk a couple of times a week, although the neighbors sometimes ask if the dog is taking HIM for a walk!

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## Shirley Washburne

### SO LONG, ROCKY

Where has he gone, my soft pussy-cat?  
With a false playmate, lured to his death for trespass?  
Or a panting victim of feline curiosity,  
Locked unsuspected in a summer garage?

Has he lost a race with wheels?  
Or did he know his time was short,  
And, silent, sought alone the final spot?

Mighty hunter, bringer of trophies,  
Scourge of the unwary bird and bunny,  
Did the hunter become the hunted?

I've patrolled the neighborhood, calling,  
But the ears that could hear tuna fish  
No longer hear my voice,  
And the Brookside Lane Irregulars know nothing.

I've put away the dishes and cleaned the litter box,  
Fastened the loose window screen,  
And run one last LOST CAT ad.

Perhaps tomorrow will grant me a new illusion of control,  
But today... today I know the truth.

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## LATER, THE TUSCARORA George Dunn

On the Rights of Animals

An English country squire is reported to have remarked, "Of course we shoot birds. What else are they good for?" Whether or not this remark is an actual quotation, it certainly captures the attitude of countless generations of humans who have been persuaded by religion and self-interest that the entire biosphere was something on the order of a fresh-air larder, challenging inconvenience and/or amusement center.

The fact that these categorizations were also applied to other humans (for "larder," read "free-labor pool," at least most of the time), should have tipped someone off that there was a flaw in the theory, but people have always had a superb ability to recategorize in the face of necessity. We manage to keep whatever group it is still profitable to exploit outside the current definition of "rights."

Traditionally, animals have been fair game because they were "dumb." That is they couldn't speak. This criterion of communication skill was pretty useful when it came to extending disregard to infants, the mentally retarded and, of course, foreigners.

Today, evidence of complex messages in the songs of whales, the mastery of sign language by certain simians, to say nothing of the whole field of Artificial Intelligence makes continued reliance on this standard very iffy.

Still, those who find animals very convenient for their uses, manage to justify their exploitation in terms of 1) the most radical acts of the opposition and 2) the most beneficial results of their faction.

Who has not heard an animal-rights debate swing toward charges of eco-terrorism and that grand old chestnut, "if it saves just one child's life...?"

With stupefying regularity, the question of animal *rights* takes on the dichotomous character of the question of animal *souls*, i.e., either they have ones just like ours, or else none at all. Sure enough, those cultures which believe in animal souls also respect animals' rights while those which deny them such find the suggestion of rights somehow blasphemous. [*Yes, it is no small irony that the word "animal" comes from the Latin for "soul."*]

As usual, proponents and antagonists appeal to the simplest (and presumably most numerous) minds in their audience, but I wonder if there aren't some in attendance who would be willing to entertain a slightly more complex paradigm.

Is it possible that animals could have *inferior* rights vis-a-vis humans without having none at all? Could we justify killing and eating them to preserve our own lives, but not just to taste some delicate part? Might we subject a hundred animals to disease to develop a cure, but not a hundred thousand to develop a new lip gloss?

For those who can handle that idea, let me advance a further notion: method and manner are important. If we decide that an animal's life or health may be sacrificed, do we automatically conclude that this animal has no further need of care or comfort or the easing of unnecessary pain? Kindness is not generally cost-effective, so we apply it only where we perceive some right to receive it. Have animals such rights? I would say that they do.

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**Rocio Carrasco**

**Parrot Ownership**

I share my life with a beautiful male abino cockatiel named Snowball that I acquired about three months ago. I remember Snowball cowering and hissing with terror as I slowly opened the cardboard box that held him on his way home. But for my lack of experience with small parrots, I did what I thought would be the most expedient manner of releasing him from the box and into his cage -- I grabbed him. Never grab a frightened parrot with bare hands! The result of my audacity was a cross somewhere between the famous "test of pain" scene in the Kung-Fu TV series and the white blur of scared and ticked off wings flapping at a Santeria dinner.

Nevertheless, we have both long since recovered from that brief initial misunderstanding and have brought a new and rock-solid understanding to light. We are friends. We are never to be apart for too long. We understand that our roles as caretaker and receiver are interchangeable since the benefits of this avian-human connection are mutual. He waits for hours at the door of the cage for my return home despite dishes full of food and water. I open the cage door and loose the Lord of the Air! He is the icky and scarey Pazuzu, Lucifer! Wait... it's just Snowball... with a noisy "whoosh whoosh" of his wings, he crash-lands clumsily on my head, grabbing chunks of hair and my eyeglasses. Wow... homecomings don't get seedier than this.

## MINDBENDING HONOR ROLL

[H = Host]	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Dale Amlee			♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
Dave A.			♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
Alison Brown	♥H			♥H	♥H	♥H		
Greg Crawford	♥	♥	♥H	♥				
George Dunn	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥		♥	♥
Grace Falvey						♥		♥
Carol Gould	♥							
Jud Horning	♥	♥		♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
Jerry Hunter		♥	♥	♥	♥		♥	
Jeff Lake					♥			
Larry Marcus					♥			
Treva Marks	♥	♥H	♥	♥	♥			♥H
Jean Miller					♥	♥		
Anna Marie Rutallie							♥H	
Nancy White	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥

## Random Sample

© by [Julie A. Yates Harkey](#)

I wrote this nearly four years ago, more for myself than my readers. I am ready to give it to you now, in memory and celebration of a brave spirit.

### Kugels

June 29, 1995

A little kitten, cream colored tabby. The first time I saw him was up at the farm near Bloomington, Indiana. The farm cats had done their usual thing, and there were several batches of kittens. This particular litter had four greys and one Kugels. He was a most unusual kitten, brave and friendly.

A large mother raccoon had been eating with the cats for a week or two, and they agreed to eat together in relative peace. On the day I'm remembering,



Kugels ran, in that inimitable kitten scurry, across the front of the house to the feeding area where the raccoon was munching cat food. The kitten ran right up to her, and when the raccoon turned around to see who was there, Kugels arched his back, spit, and raised up his paw to scratch, all 11 ounces of this four-week-old kitten. No raccoon was going to keep him from eating! The raccoon backed off a bit, and continued eating. Kugels was lucky he didn't get eaten. A little later he nuzzled up against the raccoon's side, maybe trying to nurse.

Farm kittens are a skittish lot; that's how they survive. Unless you get to them real early, usually just as they're beginning to open their eyes, you can't even get close enough to pet them. Kugels was different, letting me pick him up, and even dosing his eyes in pleasure as I rubbed under his chin. It didn't take long, that first day, for Ted and I to decide that this kitten had a home with us. I spent some time that night trying to think of a good name for a kitten that had more courage than sense, but couldn't think of anything. I asked Ted the next morning, and he immediately replied, "We ought to call him Balls!" That was perfect. Almost. We weren't quite sure we could get away with calling a kitten Balls, so looked in the German/English dictionary. "Kugel" is the German word for ball. Thus, Kugels.

When we came back to the farm the next day, I decided it was time to take him home. He was eagerly eating dry cat food, so there would be no problem feeding him. Besides, I was afraid that if we didn't take him home right away something would happen to him. Farms are, after all, dangerous places—possums, coyotes, and other hazards, not to mention large raccoons.

Kugels' first day at home was a bit frustrating for both kitten and me. He had a simple answer to anything he wanted—meow! Each time he started up I would take him to the litter box or the food dish. Within a day or two he learned where things were, and never once missed the litter box. Very smart cat. The only thing that we had to work at a little was drinking. After all, there were no nipples on his milk saucer. I dipped my finger in the milk and touched it to his nose. Soon he was licking it off my finger. The next step was to lower my finger into the milk, and he would lap up the milk as long as my finger was in it. By the next day he was drinking out of the saucer without help. By the end of the week, he had graduated from milk to water, and was eating kitten chow with vigor.

Spook and Ghost, our already-resident cats, weren't thrilled to have Kugels as company. Ghost hissed, spat, and sulked. Every time she walked past the cat carrier that Kugels slept in at night, she hissed, whether he was in it or not. Spook, on the other hand, was afraid of the kitten; I don't think he knew what Kugels was. Kugels was interested in both of them, not a bit afraid. He just wanted somebody to play with and snuggle asleep with. It was really funny to watch all 12+ pounds of Spook backing across the room with a little bitty kitten trying to sniff his nose. After a week or so Spook quit running, and Ghost began to tolerate Kugels.

As I said before, Kugels was a very smart kitten. He learned his way around quickly, and never once failed to make it to the litter box. He was unusual, for a cat, in his response to humans. I was used to Ghost's independent disdain for human wishes, so it was a wonderful surprise to see Kugels eagerly trot across the floor toward me when I called him. He learned his name so quickly! Part of the attraction for him, I'm sure, was that we were cat substitutes, but mostly he just liked people.

He was so fierce about his food. I gave him a piece of macaroni and cheese, and he growled direly all the while he was eating it. When I gave him another piece, he whapped his paw down on it so no other cat would get it. I gave him

a piece of chicken cartilage, and he downed it quickly, growling and snarling whenever he imagined anyone was too close. Kugels had adjusted well to living with us, and had gained four ounces.

He liked to play. One time Kugels was on his back, playing with Dan's fingers. Dan moved his hand so it was over Kugels' head, and Kugels would reach up with his front paws, throw his head back, and open his mouth. They did this over and over, and it looked so much like a television preacher posturing, yelling, "Praise the Lord!" that I almost fell out of my chair laughing.

Toward the beginning of his second week with us, we often found him sleeping in front of the refrigerator, where the warm air came out. This wasn't too surprising, because he was used to being outside on the farm where it was warm, and we have air conditioning. Occasionally he fell asleep while playing. I didn't think this too strange, either, just a peculiarity. Kittens do sleep a lot, right?

On Friday of the second week Kugels had been with us, the little signs that I had been seeing all week began to add up when I noticed that he was falling asleep sitting up. He wasn't as bouncy, either, moving across the room like a little old man. He just looked feeble. By the next morning his voracious appetite had disappeared. When I took him to the vet the next morning he was so weak that he couldn't stand up, and was cocking his head at a funny angle. The vet gave him an antibiotic shot, and gave me a nutritional supplement to give him, along with worm medicine. She was not optimistic, though-his temperature had dropped, and he had neurological symptoms that could mean a congenital defect.

When we got home I fed Kugels the supplement and medicine with a syringe, and set up a light over a cardboard box to keep him warm. He began to come around, and soon we heard his familiar meow! That meant he wanted something. I looked up, and he was climbing out of the box. Quite a feat for a little guy who hadn't been able to hold up his head a little earlier. He made it to the litter box twice, and refused to stay in the cardboard box. I made a little warm corner for him so he could be on the carpet, which seemed to make him comfortable. He even went in to his water dish, and purred so loud I could hear him across the kitchen.

Soon he was back in his corner, though; his last bit of energy seemed spent. He meowed occasionally, in pain this time. Soon I went over to him, and he was barely breathing. Ted held him for a while, then when he had to go to work, I held him while he breathed his last.

He was such a wonderful little thing, his spirit so much stronger than his body. I have never felt such a connection with an animal as I did with Kugels. He came to me at a time when I had learned to let myself care deeply, and when I really needed a friend. Now he is gone, and I miss him terribly. He was my loved companion, if only for two weeks. He died on June 24, 1995.

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**B** \_\_\_\_\_

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**S** \_\_\_\_\_

**I** \_\_\_\_\_

**L** \_\_\_\_\_

by Basil Wentworth

## MADRIGALS OF MONEY - 145

Big bucks are a comfort, I know,

(Sing heighdy, sing heighdy, sing ho)  
 But use charge accounts,  
 And you'll find large amounts  
 Of spondulix are rather *de trop*.

Another thing strikes me as funny:  
 (Sing fa, and sing la, and sing nonny)  
 Some people can be  
 (My good wife, e.g.)  
 Quite rich, though without any money.

The odds sweepstakes offer today  
 (Sing hip, sing horray, and sing hey!)  
 Are exceedingly thin,  
 And you don't have to win  
 To be one in a million -- just play.

The drawing takes only a minute  
 (Sing zip it, sing snap it, sing pin it)  
 But whatever they draw,  
 There is one certain law:  
 To win it, you've got to be in it.

Buy respect? No, by George, you just can't  
 (Sing "A" as in aardvark and ant)  
 But a man who has spent  
 Enough money can rent  
 A pretty darned good sycophant.

\* \* \* \* \*

I've no need for millions, 'tis true,  
 (Sing rose, sing rosemary, sing rue)  
 But that's speaking of need;  
 Whereas limits to greed--  
 Well, only the skies will do.

## To Keep In MIND

### Upcoming Gatherings and Events

*** 1999 ***	
<b>July 1-5</b>	<b>Orange County AG</b> ; Hyatt-Regency Long Beach, (800) 233-1234; rooms \$99 - \$119; Registration: \$59 to 5/31; Greg de Hoogh, PO Box 53841, Irvine, CA 92619-3841 <a href="http://members.home.net/ag99/">http://members.home.net/ag99/</a>
<b>July 23-25</b>	<b>Columbus Area Mensa Coup d'etat RG</b> ; Days Inn North, 1212 E. Dublin-Granville Road (Rte 161), Columbus, OH 43229 (614) 885-9696, ext 0; rooms \$35 (Mensa rate); Registration: \$40 thru March 31, \$45 thru may 31, \$50 after; Registrar: Marshall Ankrom, Columbus, OH. <a href="mailto:Mankrom@netwalk.com">Mankrom@netwalk.com</a>
<b>September 3-6</b>	<b>Rivers III</b> ; RG Chair: Bob Heasley, Sewickley, PA; <a href="mailto:bheasley@usaor.net">bheasley@usaor.net</a> Registration \$40 (checks to Western Pennsylvania Mensa)
<b>October 1-3</b>	<b>Mensa Rocks</b> Aurora Woodlands Hotel, 800 N. Aurora Road, Aurora, OH 44202-9516; (800) 877-7849 or (33)[sic] 995-3172; Rooms \$59; Registration \$50 to 6/30, \$55 to 9/15; \$60 after; checks: CAM-RG 1999. Registrar Dave Michel, POB 1236, Willoughby OH 44096-1236; email: <a href="mailto:ikillgore_dmichel@compuserve.com">ikillgore_dmichel@compuserve.com</a> NOTE

	NEW LOCALE.
<b>October 15-17</b>	Hollywood, FL. Contact Jay Bertolet.
<b>October 29-31</b>	<b>HalloweeM 24</b> Arlington Park Hilton, 3400 W. Euclid, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1099 (847) 394-2000; fax (847) 394-2095; rooms \$79 (reserve by 10/08 and mention Mensa); Registration \$45 thru 7/31, \$50 thru 9/15, \$55 thru 10/15; \$60 after; Bill Slankard, Registrar, Arlington Heights, IL. email: <a href="mailto:weem-registrar@chicago.us.mensa.org">weem-registrar@chicago.us.mensa.org</a> . Website: <a href="http://www.chicago.us.mensa.org/">www.chicago.us.mensa.org/</a>
<b>December 3-5</b>	<b>AMC Meeting</b> , Minneapolis MN. Contact: Judith C. Hogan.

**\*\*\* 2000 \*\*\***

<b>July 5-9</b>	<b>Delaware Valley Mensa AG</b> (Philadelphia) (Joint AG with Mensa Canada)
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**\*\*\* 2001 \*\*\***

<b>July 4-8</b>	<b>North Texas Mensa AG</b> (Dallas)
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## BULLETIN BOARD

### **Nancy White:**

A reminder that the Monthly Book Sale, started by our former LocSec Greg Crawford, will resume under my administration beginning with the June Meeting. Please bring any good-condition books (no textbooks or workbooks, please) you'd like to give to a good home.

**PFLAG** (Parents, Family/Friends of Lesbians and Gays) a group for support and education. Second Sundays, 2:00 p.m. at St. Luke's Methodist Church. 86th Street, near Meridian.

**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](mailto:MarieBeltrame@juno.com) or [Beltrame@fls.infi.net](mailto:Beltrame@fls.infi.net)

### **Petra Ritchie:**

#### **Glee and Sympathy**

A service for those Mensans who are having memorable experiences of one sort or another.

If you know of a Mensan who has suffered a setback **or** who has something to celebrate, please contact 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](mailto:pritchie@ibj.com)

***The ExCom:*** We have a vacancy due to the resignation of Jerry Hunter. Anyone interested in filling it may apply to any remaining member of our august body.

*(Returning member Dom Jervis has already tossed his hat in the ring, but no decision will be made before the June ExCom Meeting.)*

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## Herman Hagemier

### Simple Arithmetic

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## Rhoda Israelov

### Biosphere 2: A "Failure" Becomes a Success

On a recent trip to Arizona, I was privileged to visit Biosphere 2, Columbia University's living laboratory for earth and the environment. Biosphere 2 consists of 6600 panes of glass held to 20 miles of spaceframe. Inside these structures, nearly 2000 species of plants and animals exist in rainforest, savannah, desert, marsh, ocean, intensive agriculture and human sections. This giant greenhouse, powered by sunlight and electricity, simulates natural weather processes such as rain and waves.

The biosphere is the thin surface layer of the Earth's outer crust, its water, and air containing all of life, including microscopic life, plants, animals and people. Biosphere 2, a microcosm of the biosphere, addresses the question: Are we using up natural resources that cannot be replaced?

Once a working ranch, the Biosphere Center land was sold to Lady Margaret, countess of Suffolk, and after her death was purchased by Motorola Corporation as a training institute. In 1979 it was donated to the University of Arizona and later purchased by the originators of Biosphere 2. Today Columbia University uses the Center as training for its earth science students and as a research center exploring how our planet's ecosystems will respond to an atmosphere containing rising amounts of carbon dioxide.

Today humans do not reside in the Biosphere. A system of air "locks" allows passage in and out of the Biosphere without contamination of the internal environment. The original mission, carried on from 1991 through 1994, was considered a failure. During those years, human crews of up to eight people lived sealed inside the structure, growing all the food they ate, recycling the air, water, and waste, exchanging only scientific samples and technical equipment with the outside world.

While the current experiments concerning global warming and the greenhouse effect are fascinating and undeniably of the greatest magnitude of urgency to our planet's future, for me the most fascinating part of the tour was the history of the human experiment, which was funded by the billionaire Bass brothers with an eye to exploring the colonization of space. The original team of four men and four women lived for two years in the Biosphere. On the equivalent of four acres of land, they cultivated all the sources of their food. (By contrast, it takes 4 to 8 acres of land to feed the average human being.)

Several problems developed relative to food. The 35 chickens that were intended to supply eggs for the group produced only one to two eggs a day; the four goats produced but one quart of milk daily. The three pigs had litters too runty to reproduce. The Biosphere scientists became, of necessity, vegetarians. Peanuts were the only source of fat. Corn, tomatoes, white

potatoes - none of these did well in Biosphere conditions, so the staple of the menu became bananas, yams, and papayas. A sample menu for dinner is still on the bulletin board: lab-lab bean soup, wheat bread, beets, salad, baked sweet potato, banana ice cream, tea. The eight scientists had been sent to gourmet cooking school, and took turns preparing the daily meals. Upon later emerging from the Biosphere, the scientists were orange from all the carotene, had cholesterol levels of 125, and lost an average of 14% of their body weight.)

In February of 1992, after half a year in the Biosphere, the scientific team began to suffer severe symptoms of oxygen deprivation, similar to altitude sickness. It was discovered that the oxygen levels, normally 21% of the atmosphere, had fallen to 14%. Oxygen was then injected into the internal atmosphere from the outside.

As later described rather derisively by the press, the experiment had failed. The sheer survival of the scientists had become the priority, to the point where they had been unable to complete the experiments relating to the Biosphere environment. \$200, 000, 000 had been spent without achieving the expected results.

In touring the living quarters that still held the paintings done by one of the Biospherians, seeing the workrooms, the kitchen, and the meeting table around which the group would assemble to compare notes and make decisions, I could not help but feel tremendous admiration for the bravery of those men and women who spent two years of their lives shut away, at least physically, from the world, in order to help save our world.

Today the \$10 million annual budget is co-funded by the Bass brothers and by Columbia University. Volvo Corporation provides scholarships to young Biospherians; a model of the new Volvo bifuel automobile (which uses half compressed natural gas and half gasoline), graces the entryway to Biosphere 2.

Organizations worldwide contribute information and receive information collected in the Command-and-Control room in the center of the Biosphere. As I stood outside the Center 4000 feet above sea level, overlooking the beautiful Canyon del Oro and the Santa Cataline Mountains, I could think only of the triumph represented by the center and particularly in this unique human experiment.

*[Unlike football teams, political campaigns, doctoral dissertations and investment strategies, scientific experiments only "fail" if they contaminate their data, not merely because they don't generate predicted results. If the goal is good data, then the news that something breaks down is as ultimately useful as the news that it endures. When Edison's labs were searching for a sufficiently refractory material to make an incandescent filament, he reputedly characterized his progress to a reporter as, "I'm having tremendous success. Already I've discovered over 5,000 things that won't work." Of course, maintaining this pure scientific ideal is a considerable challenge when one has considerable funding, academic prestige and potential public humiliation on the line, to say nothing of having to gasp to breathe. -Ed]*

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Primer for the **August** Topic:

## A Taste of Summer

Every so often we ought to have a topic that doesn't require any philosophic research or call on the writer's powers of persuasion. In short, one that doesn't **argue** about anything.

So here's a chance to wax rhapsodical, and what better subject for Mensans than **food**?

Most of us, I think, are long enough in the tooth to remember the days before everything was gas-ripened, freeze-dried, shrink-wrapped and available all year round in air-conditioned hypermarkets. Even those among us who think JFK might have been one of the Beatles should have some life experience with summer vacation and the changes that just getting out of the school cafeteria could work on the diet.

So let fancies flow and regale us with gustatory reveries of the lazy, hazy days. I'll go first:

There were three edible markers to the summers of my youth: strawberries, corn (on the cob) and watermelon.

Strawberries, the most delicate of the three, appeared in June and it seemed that their season faded before more than five servings could be worked into the meal plan. My family was not of the devoted shortcake persuasion, though of course we had it; mostly strawberries were consumed with sugar and cream, the sugar being powdered if at all possible and the cream nicked from the neck of the not-yet-homogenized bottle of Robert's milk left in the little cooler on the back stoop. Taking **all** the cream (thus creating skimmed milk for the rest of the family) was an offense, but just a little was the reward for early rising. Alas, the succulent berries were often gone before the end of the school year.

More stable was the July corn. I should note that once upon a time the expression "knee-high by the Fourth of July" actually expressed a satisfactory growing pattern. That, of course, was for "horse corn"; *sweet corn*, the table kind, was available a bit earlier - but not a lot earlier.

For such a straightforward vegetable (technically, a kernel of corn is a complete fruit), corn-on-the-cob is surrounded by ceremony that would do honor to a Japanese tea house. Our preference was for quick boiled, high stacked and eaten typewriter-return style with excessive amounts of butter and plain salt, employing always those little plastic spikes stored and presented with the reverence of Christmas tree ornaments. A visiting adult once added black pepper to his ear, raising instant suspicion that he must be a pervert, or, at the very least, a Communist.

Two meat dishes were acceptable with corn-on-the-cob: either fried chicken or homemade hamburgers, chicken preferred, probably because it authorized the use of mashed potatoes. (Burgers qualified for chips, or, more rarely, fries.)

Apple pie sometimes followed this meal, but it wasn't, um, *integral* to it. A better dessert was ice cream, which could appear as much as an hour after the last ear of corn, permitting more room in the biological "bread basket." The best of all ice cream was the ice cream float, whether with Coke ("black cow") or 7-Up ("white cow").

A touch of sorrow accompanied the watermelons, since by the time they were

ripe, the summer days were a -waning. Didn't stop us from doing seeds-for-distance, though.

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