

Excerpts from the October 1999 MIND

The Newsletter of

[Central Indiana Mensa](#)

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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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MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

September's MIND turned out pretty nicely, if I say so myself, despite the fact that on the night before printing day, I realized I'd omitted Dom Jervis's article and had to retype, reinsert, find three more pages of material, renumber and revise the contents. Dom gets this kind of service because 1) he's a reliable contributor and 2) it was my fault. Don't expect this effort for ordinary late submissions.

On the other hand, the MINDBending for last monthy was decidedly on the disappointing side. Six volunteers (three of them being the Editor, the Publisher and the Host) working for four hours is not a good showing for a 400-person organization. There is an alternative to folding parties, but I'm trying to avoid it: we can hire this out, which means we pay for stapling instead of member services.

* * *

On yet another hand, it's 9/9/99 as I write this and with one day to deadline, the mailbox is looking mighty empty of contributions for the October theme. This is not exactly a crisis, as I've learned how to find "stuff" for the pages, but it is kind of a disappointment because it's not your stuff. MIND is for Central Indiana Mensans to sound off; I don't understand why you'd be content to just read what Mensans in other Groups have to say.

Somebody suggested I should offer TWO themes each month to draw in more writers. I can do that, but I hope we all know by now that the themes are there to inspire, not to limit; members can write on ANYTHING, not just the themes.

You won't see this for another three weeks, but my guess is that a couple of current events will still be in the news. One is the hullabaloo over the FBI's use of pyrotechnics at Waco. While almost certainly these did not start the inferno, how will the feds ever convince their critics of that now that they've been caught in a cover-up? The least damage they can suffer is that more citizens will realize that their government doesn't trust them with the simple truth, so it serves up an "enhanced" truth with all of the distracting details trimmed off.

Another sure subject is that GOP dauphin George "Dub-ya" will face more embarrassing questions about his checkered past. So far, he's apparently a shady financial dealer, a draft-dodger and an abuser of women and nobody outside the D.A.R. believes he never had coke up his nose. It's almost as though the Republicans took all the conemnations they made of Clinton as qualifications for their candidate.

* * *

'Tis now 13 September, and I believe the contributors have never been more creative -- with reasons for not meeting the deadline. And yet, they all promise "soon"; will my patience hold?

* * *

Turning away from Mensa vicissitudes, the Fall TV season seems to be singularly uninspired, with the exception of the "Ally McBeal" people, who have taken a page from the porn movie textbook -- no, not that page -- the one that says there's enough stuff edited out of several shows to make a new one.

Reminds me of the old puzzle: If five butts will make one new cigarette, how many free smokes in an ashtray of 25 butts?

LOCSECTION

Grace Falvey

Don't Miss These

In an effort to keep you and our calendar editor from becoming bored, the ExCom has endorsed the idea of scheduling some new, low-maintenance activities, mostly on weekdays.

* Marion Harcourt suggests getting together for dinner before each Monthly Meeting. See Calendar Events listing for details.

* Bob and I invite you to help us discover the less-than-famous restaurants around Indianapolis. For openers, let's try El Sol De Tala, 2444 East Washington St, at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 20.

* Shirley Washburne picks cheap flicks at Encore Moviez. This was announced in last month's Bulletin Board. Check this month's announcements for details, or call Shoiley at (317) 839-9282.

* And why does everything have to happen at night? Join me at what Peggy

Sargent calls my Westside office, then Indianapolis Museum of Art, on the first Tuesday afternoon of the month. We can have lunch, enjoy the beautifully landscaped grounds and the outdoor sculpture, or take an informal tour of the ever-changing IMA exhibits. I'll wait for you in front of the coat-check counter, wearing TWO pieces of I.D.: a Mensa name tag and an IMA Docent badge.

In Case You Missed It

August's activities went well. Moving the Corn Roast to Columbus didn't prevent good attendance by those from "up north." There were eleven people from the Indianapolis area, two from Bloomington, one from Bedford and one from Edinburgh, in addition to the host and hostess.

We couldn't have imagined a better location. Janet and Warren Ward's backyard blends, unfenced, into several others, so it resembles a park, but with all the comforts of home. The Wards were extremely gracious hosts who put all their guests at ease. The food was good, the weather perfect and the conversation far-reaching, touching on everything from the significance of Beanie Babies to the nature of God. What's more, we've been invited back next year!

Forty people showed up for the clowning around at August's Monthly Meeting, where a group of Shriner clowns brought out the child in all of us with stories, jokes and sleight-of-hand. They also provided food for thought by sharing their experiences from their visits to children's hospitals.

Also in August, American Mensa presented its National Service Award to Russ Washburne for serving as Regional Vice Chairman, as Assistant Chairman of the National Nominating Committee in two elections, and for other leadership activities. Way to go, Russ!

We'll Miss Him

In the midst of August's good times, we were saddened by the news of John Hartman's death. He had been an ebullient presence in our group for many years, serving as coordinator of the DrySIG and perennial host for MINDBending.

LETTERS

George Dunn, Managing Editor:

We received the September 1999 MIND today. Nice job -- content and editorially! My thanks and compliments to the managing editor and all the MIND staff for putting together a good publication month after month. (That written by a retired 40-year writer, "spokesperson" and generally burned-out hack.)

Malcolm Forbes was quoted: "Forbes Magazine will never knowingly lie to you. But it will also never tell you the truth." Alas, [that] is true of all writing. No article, letter, opinion tells the whole story. That is for the reader to determine, not the writer to tell.

The demonstrated genius of the MIND managing editor is the ability to provide a forum where lies are not told and the reader can without effort, determine the truth.

Will there be weak articles written by fools consumed with themselves? Sure.
Will there be articles that truly deserve more widespread circulation? Sure.
The genius is that the MIND forum is provided by an evenhanded
provocateur/editor.

Theodore Martin

[Shucks, folks, I'm speechless - Ed]

With the birth this September 12 of Alexander Israelov, active and long-time member Rhoda Israelov becomes a grandmother.

Rhoda is pulling Nana duty with the proud parents as of this writing, but will doubtless be back in time for the next Monthly Meeting with pictures.

Answer to the Editor's puzzle: Six. (The five "new" cigarettes made from the twenty-five butts generate five additional butts for the final - very well-tarred - coffin nail.)

Dom Jervis

Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual renewal can result from a personal revelation, from cheating death, or some other event from which one feels changed forever. Or, it can occur simply by coming "home."

In March, 1996, I passed the Mensa test while living here. Knowing I would soon move away, I participated in the few activities I could before I left. Like one who has happened upon his ideal occupation, I immediately felt at home with the people of Central Indiana Mensa.

Alas, along came my time to go. Fortunately, the new job included occasional business travel to Indy. Unfortunately, the stays were all too brief, and leaving my adopted town was truly depressing. Each time, I hoped the next trip here would be soon, but it was never soon enough.

the thought of quitting

Worse yet, to say that a comfort level was never reached in the new local chapter is a euphemism. There were some wonderful people, and not all of the experiences were unpleasant. But, enough unfortunate events transpired to ultimately minimize my participation in their local activities. In fact, the thought of quitting permanently did occur, more than once. Writing for MIND (I never wrote for their newsletter) helped to maintain a tie here. It kept me going through some rough times, and I sincerely appreciate all the kind responses I've received.

Then, one fine day, fortune smiled upon me, in the form of a job offer from Community Centers of Indianapolis, Inc. I was coming home! Although my return here has been a painstaking, life-complicating, often exasperating experience, I would do it all again without a moment of hesitation. Living here again has been worth all I have endured.

Elation turned to euphoria when I was offered a seat on your ExCom. In less than two months since my return, I have already been more active than I was

the past two years in my former chapter.

I am back where I belong, enjoying a spiritual renewal in the truest sense. This is one of life's rare second chances, and taking full advantage of it is Priority One. I'm going to have a lot of fun this time around, and I cordially invite all of you to join me!

Any organization's most important asset is its members. If you belong to Mensa solely for the credential, that is certainly your prerogative. However, you are missing out on a great time with some fascinating people, and you can get a lot more for your forty-five dollar annual dues than you are, for little or no incremental expense on your part. If you have never been active, or have been "away" for awhile, please consider coming back. You just might have fun. If you don't, then tell me (or any other ExCom member) how to make it better for you. If you don't tell us, then how are we supposed to know?

Consider this an invitation. That's because we need you, and I do mean you!

I look forward to seeing you soon!

David Vaprin

PATH

I was at summer camp on a great lake. Girls and boys, if they were brave enough and strong enough, could prove themselves by swimming across -- risking scorn if they had to be pulled out by the rescue boat. I started across, full of confidence. It was a terrible struggle, but at some point it was all over. I remembered a plaque I had seen in a seaside store. "Lord," I said, "be with me, for your Sea is so great and I am so small." This was my first step onto Jacob's Ladder.

Not long after, I read Bertrand Russell and others. I stepped off Jacob's Ladder for a time, until it was clear that superstitious religion, the only kind visible in my home town, was not all there was. I remembered that Jacob wrestled with the angel, and was not defeated.

I was young and in professional school. The endless reading, the hours, the pressure -- the pain kept growing. Soon there were pills for the pain. The doctor gave me plenty of pills. The pills were sickening, and confusing, and increasingly necessary. I had read about the Twelve Steps in a pamphlet. One day I turned to my higher power, in whatever sense I understood her, and said, "I can be in control of the pills but not the pain. That I will turn over to you." This was my next rung on Jacob's Ladder.

I was a young man with a teaching post. A colleague lost his job because they hated his wife. I said that was unjust. It was made clear to me how reckless I was. Somehow, I could not deny that there is a power greater than ourselves, whose justice we shall pursue. I could not get off Jacob's Ladder.

The tradition of my forebears explains the spiritual quest as an ascent into heaven on Jacob's Ladder. The most pious and holy may be many rungs above us, but we are all on the same ladder, seeking the Most High. I have returned to that tradition, in whatever sense I understand it, to honor my foremothers and forefathers and to have with me four thousand years of human experience. I am still small, but perhaps not alone. There may be a higher power, not only as my support, but also able to demand justice and mercy. There may truly be faith, but not contrary to reason. (The tradition tells many stories to make the latter point. A legal dispute broke out in heaven, and

the matter was presented to the rabbis of the Great Assembly. The vote went against Moses -- how could this be? Because the Law is now on earth and not in heaven.)

So I offer my tradition, giving faith in life's goodness, calling forth justice, respecting reason. And we have the psalms. To me, it seems irresistible. Obviously, God's view on the matter is that a multiplicity of religions serves his purpose best, so I do not expect Jacob's Ladder to get overcrowded, which is fortunate since I take such tiny steps.

Richard Jones

IF GOD, THEN WHAT?

The reason my agnostic friends and I play spiritually hard-to-get is the fear of intrusion. I don't want God to spoil whatever it is I think I've got going, so I prefer to shop around. Aren't the various world religions all like packages on the same shelf ... some of which can really mess with your day? If I choose the wrong one, I'm going to wind up in a box I don't like. I want a sweater that goes with my eyes; I want a hat that fits my head, and I want a religion that suits my lifestyle -- even if that means inventing my own. I don't mind putting God in a box, but He'd better not try the same trick on me.

I am stuck with a version of the Groucho Marx problem: "Why would I want to bow to a god that would let me invent him?" I am making Freud's mistake: It isn't all about me! If God is out there, then God has the right to self-definition. Projecting whatever I want debunks my own basis for religion in the first place. I've tried it with blind dates and it doesn't work there either.

Perhaps I could take the Eastern path and pretend that God is not OTHER, but that leaves me to attune to myself and how can I submit to a universe based on me? Worse yet, if God is a collective of all of us, then God must certainly be evil, for I know how nature works and the stunts I've pulled. Evolution cannot keep ahead of Thermodynamics II, and Karma is no match for the law of the jungle.

So far, I see to it that I am autonomous of God, and I hope that God is autonomous of me, or else the world really sucks. Likewise, religion must begin with a relationship of discovery or else it's all just meaningless gesture. My spiritual journey will amount to nothing more than seeking a steady high.

If I want to get onto speaking terms with an Unknown God, I've got to start someplace. I'm not likely to find God under any rock or bush. I won't have much success at building a ladder into Heaven either. Religion shopping is less like sampling shoes than it is like seeking the magic words to access Ali Baba's cave. Who knows the secret code to open the gates of Heaven? Do ANY of these roads lead to Rome?

It is not enough to simply hope that God means to be found. God's address is out of my range, so if I am going to know God, then God is going to have to come to me. I must wait and trust in God's self-revelation. In other words, should God lower a ladder to me from Heaven, even one laden with antique metaphors, I would be well advised to take it.

Forget about church, mosque or temple. Abraham (father of more religions than he dreamed) had no Scriptures. He had no priest, no synagogue. Abraham knew only that God would meet him at the oak tree. Instead of scrounging for the magic procedures of serenity, perhaps I should start with

the bold assumption that God may actually be listening.

Dare I hope that I can have a relationship with God that is free from boxes; where God gets to define His own agenda and when I get to start with an authentic me? Perhaps to open the gates of Heaven, all that I must do is to knock, mind my manners, and introduce myself. Dare I face the possibility that God may want to reveal Himself to me?

Probably not. Playing the agnostic is so much easier!

MJ TALA

Spiritual Renewal

As a child of the Sixties and a current resident of the Nineties (for a few more months, anyway), I conjure up some diverse and esoteric images at the words "spiritual renewal": incense, Hare Krishnas, transcendental meditation and, more recently, aromatherapy, "simplifying," and any of a large number of guides and paths to get you back inside yourself. Of course, it happens, as Peter Gabriel said in "Carpet Crawlers," "You've gotta get in to get out." The purpose behind getting in is to reconnect, ultimately, with the greater spiritual world.

the workout room at 4:30 a.m.

I congratulate anyone for whom any of these or other techniques have worked. I have found my best moments of spirit and renewal, of meeting myself and making peace with the whole rest of my world, in three places: the workout room at 4:30 in the morning, the mile-and-a-half walk to or from work, and the back of my motorcycle, just about anywhere.

splendid isolation

Self and spirit are obscured and drained by the constant, unavoidable interface with others and things, by the modern-day tendency to multitask, and to be constantly available via cell phone, modem and pager. There is no alone time, no solitude, no splendid isolation. Spirit and self are fragile creatures compared to the battering of everyday life. In the absence of others (and what other fool would be rising at 4 a.m. to sling cast iron?), I can concentrate on my body, my thoughts, my music. I can be silly and dance in front of the mirrored wall. I can, and do, come to grips with the parts that don't quite work as well as they used to, and cuss at the ones that just hurt.

we aren't the only ones here

On the walk to work, I can admire the architecture and landscaping, which clarifies to me what I do and don't like, and why. I can watch other people and wonder about their lives. In many cases, I find reason to be very grateful, indeed, for what I have. I can see the ducks out for a morning cruise on the river, which I have to cross every day to get to and from work. The ducks remind me that we aren't the only ones here, and that work isn't ALL there is to the day. I can see the massive amounts of construction and renovation and recall the civilizations that all thought they were pretty amazing, too, but are no longer here to crow about it.

Especially, on my motorcycle, I am drawn down into a very fine line of concentration which, conversely, requires me to pay attention to nearly everything, in the name of survival and the ongoing pleasure of the ride. Focus

is rarely really required of us in day-to-day tasks. You won't die if you look away from the monitor. There is something very freeing about that focus. I am forced to stop worrying about the financial reports, the laundry and even getting this article written. It's a seductive thing.

There isn't any conclusion here. Peace and restoration are where you find them. Just make sure you notice.

Later, the Tuscarora George Dunn

Pricing Spiritual Renewal

As fate would have it, the month I sat down to address this topic was the month His Holiness the Dalai Lama dropped by Indiana to do the Kalachakra Meditation, which I understand had something to do with world peace and serenity. I express that so hesitantly, not because I have any doubts as to the high lama's sincerity, but because the Meditation was from my perspective largely a fundraising event.

That tends to be a widely-shared perspective, with numerous feature writers in Bloomington and beyond sharpening their wit on *bon mots* such as "Enlightenment: \$1,000" and "World Brotherhood for the Affluent."

Still, money makes the world go 'round and it's not as though the concept of cashing in is alien to Western holy men. The Catholic Church and Billy Graham manage to get themselves rendered unto; the D. L.'s people just like to get their money up front.

And yet -- with all the best rationale against it, I still can't help but feel the whole experience is tainted: holy guys and holy events should be, well, less secure about their finances. Being in Oneness with the Ultimate and accepting the impermanence of the illusory world somehow ought to translate into a little less concern for the bottom line.

"Take no thought for the morrow..."¹ Admittedly, an admonishment from another tradition, but wasn't the Buddha a mendicant? Don't we just naturally associate holiness with (voluntary) poverty?

To my mind, at least, the definitive sign that one's guru has lost his aura is when he tells his disciples, "Give me all your money."

So does this mean the only true enlightenment is a cheap one? As another old observation puts it, "the laborer is worthy of his hire"². Why shouldn't the sensei/rabbi/sifu get a little something for his trouble? We pay lawyers and psychiatrists for their time, even if they don't help us; ministers and imams gotta eat, too, you know.

Maybe cost is not a good test for spiritual purity. Certainly the argument has been made that the sacrifice of the acolyte enhances his spiritual growth. Why should his worldly self go to waste? The Master is willing to bear that burden for the greater good.

I do not wish to suggest that all divines are charlatans. However, all who must balance their fiduciary interests with the availability of their message are exposing themselves to temptation. God may be jealous, but Mammon is a regular psycho when it comes to focus on his worship.

The challenge for the teacher becomes the challenge for the student. Those who seek a guided path to holiness must at once trust their guide and remain vigilant for signs that he's lost his way. A Zen master once advised a disciple, "If you meet the Buddha, kill him." He meant that the true Buddha wouldn't be advertising his station, so anyone so calling himself would be a fraud.

Here's a greater question than whether the master has his eye on heaven or on the till: can anyone be successful in his own spiritual journey if he can't wholeheartedly trust his spiritual leader?

I don't know.

1 Matt 6:34

2 Luke 10:7

Later, the Tuscarora George Dunn

Abdiel

When it comes to heroes, I prefer literary characters to the flesh-and-blood variety. Perhaps they lack the plausibility of the real-life champions, but they rest secure of any subsequent reporter digging up their unsavory past. Besides, a good hero stands for an ideal, not a personal triumph.

Oddly, the most heroic of literary characters often have "walk-on roles." Perhaps the central characters need a few flaws to maintain interest, but I also note that hero-characters often get killed. Two examples occur to me from Shakespeare: "First Servant" from King Lear and the classy Emilia of Othello.

Somewhat happier outcome for his opposition to tyranny falls to Milton's Abdiel, a brief figure in Paradise Lost. He gets in two short speeches and a lick at his former employer before the story moves away from him, but I take him for a mascot based on that short appearance.

In Paradise Lost, Satan, the rebel angel, incites one-third of the celestial population to revolt against God. Two-thirds, of course, resist his appeals, but of his own pre-rebellion followers, only Abdiel breaks ranks. In so doing, he escapes physical violence, but has to face down a seemingly universal opposition from his former compatriots. Satan and Abdiel have a couple of shouting matches, during which the former says, in essence, "You disloyal scum..." and to which the latter replies, "Look who's talking." Milton, of course, renders it all much more elegantly.

I like Abdiel because he refuses to "go along" with the company line. His defection, it must be recognized, puts him on the winning side, but his actions do not suggest self-interest. He does not, for example, cozen Lucifer along with "yes, boss" until he finds himself in a position to switch sides safely, but speaks up immediately. For all he knows, the whole angelic host has bought the Devil's program; certainly all his ex-friends have.

Simplistic folk might second my endorsement of Abdiel on the "God=good; Devil=bad" principle, and skeptics might oppose it on exactly the same principle, denied. However, my admiration for him springs not from his getting on the "Right" side, but from his choosing his side in the face of coercion to do otherwise.

Arguably, Satan also shows the same strong will, voluntarily choosing rebellion. The difference lies in Satan's expectation of conquering heaven (he

miscalculates the opposition) and Abdiel's willingness to take come what may for maintaining his integrity.

Like the other hero-characters mentioned, Abdiel does not act for his own advantage, but in his conception of Right.

We need Abdiels and Emilias and First Servants in real life.

BULLETIN BOARD

Petra Ritchie:

Glee and Sympathy

Sharing with 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, (*especially* 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

Herman Hagemier: Extracts from my forthcoming book on Physics which have been published in MIND over the last several months must be discontinued to preserve the copyright for the new publisher. Please be aware that all Hagemier articles in MIND are protected by copyright and no one may republish them individually or as a collection without express permission from the author.

Nancy White: Please contribute books in good condition to the Monthly Book Sale.

Jud Horning: I'm seeking a ride and a roommate for Halloween. Please call me at 815-1090 or leave a message with my parents at 255-2162.

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

Shirley Washburne: Cheap Movie SIG meets at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 7th, at Encore Moviez, 3 miles West of I-465 on Rockville Road. This should give us time to decide what to see! The freight is \$2 + popcorn or whatever. Check the movies page in the paper for new titles. Call Shirley Washburne at 839-9282 for further information or to discuss options!

To Keep In MIND

Upcoming Gatherings and Events

***** 1999 *****

October 1-3	Mensa Rocks Aurora Woodlands Hotel, 800 N. Aurora Road, Aurora, OH 44202-9516; (800) 877-7849 or (33)[sic] 995-3172; Rooms \$59; Registration \$55 to 9/15; \$60 after; checks: CAM-RG 1999. Registrar Dave Michel, POB 1236, Willoughby OH 44096-1236; email: ikillgore_dmichel@compuserve.com NOTE NEW LOCALE.
October 15-17	Hollywood, FL. Contact Jay Bertolet.
October 29-31	HalloweeM 24 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: weem-registrar@chicago.us.mensa.org . Website: www.chicago.us.mensa.org/
December 3-5	AMC Meeting , Minneapolis MN. Contact: Judith C. Hogan.
December 10-12	Cincinnati Area mensa , Countdown.

***** 2000 *****

January 28-30	Circle City RG: Y2K Survivors' Party. Waterfront Plaza Hotel, 2930 Waterfront Parkway West, Indianapolis, IN 46214; (317) 299-8400; rooms \$62, mention Mensa; registrar Karen Wilczewski . rates \$40 until K-122 (9/1); \$45 to K-92 (10/1); \$50 to K-31 (12/1); \$55 to 1/1/00; \$60 thereafter.
July 5-9	Delaware Valley Mensa AG (Philadelphia) (Joint AG with Mensa Canada)

***** 2001 *****

July 4-8	North Texas Mensa AG (Dallas)
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***** 2002 *****

July 3-7	Phoenix AG
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B _____
A _____
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L _____

by Basil Wentworth

149 - Diet Rites III

A (quote) unimpeachable source
 (Whose word I don't question, of course)
 Observed, "I must curry

My horse in a hurry."
But who on earth wants curried horse?

"I assure you," she said, "it's hot ham,
And I wouldn't cook something like Spam,
But I'll have to confess
That it turned out a mess,
So I guess it must be wreck of lamb."

It's not a tale told by a wino,
But an actual fact. You and I know
That poaching's a threat
To rhinoceros - yet

Who the deuce would have use for poached rhino?

The chicken ran faster than most,
But he still was no match for the host
Of cars. He was creamed!
And somebody screamed,
"I just love creamed chicken on toast!"

I eat, with my OJ and toast,
The Kellogg food I like the most:
It's the product that they
Chose to call Special K --
And I'm glad that it's not made by Post.

* * * * *

Though some may despise and abhor you,
I shout to the skies "I adore you!"
While others may use
Their glares to abuse,
I only have eyes, my dear, for you.

THE COLORS OF FALL

Many are the colors which cross my vision
as the sun sets lower in the sky.
The sun has left its yellow in the maples
as a prelude to seeing the maples seem to die.

Many are the colors which cross my vision
as days grow shorter at an increasing pace.
The fire of summer is reflected in the orange of the oak,
in preparation for their browning, then baring face.

Many are the colors which cross my vision
as evenings climate begins to chill.
Summer sunsets now are created only in the sugar's leaf,
as the syrup's flow becomes still.

Many are the colors which cross my vision
as formations of geese leave wakes across the blue.
The dogwood is again in dramatic array exposing now the black of bark where
white blossoms grew.

Many are the colors which cross my vision
as Claire's pansies give way to the mum.
The colors of fall; yellow, orange, brown, red, and blue,
tell of the blacks, grays and whites yet to come.

Tom Zmak

Bob Dill
 George Dunn
 Mack Earnhardt
 Eric Ellis
 Marcele Everest
 Grace Falvey
 Carol Gould
 Jay Hayes
 Jud Horning
 Jerry Hunter
 Rhoda Israelov
 Dom Jervis
 Jeff Lake
 Larry Marcus
 Treva Marks
 Jean Miller
 Anna Marie Rutallie
 Russ Washburne
 Shirley Washburne
 Nancy White
 Karen Wilczewski

MINDSTUFFING

[Being remotely useful data which you may use to amaze your friends if you can somehow steer the conversation in a direction where it might come up]

This month: The Theatre

Remember the Hanna-Barbera character "Snagglepuss," whose signature line was, "exit, stage left (or right)"? Well, which way is "stage left" anyway? Okay, remember that - except for Snagglepuss - these are stage directions, not lines; "stage left" means the *actor's* left when he's in his most frequent position, namely facing the audience. An actor exiting stage left would move off stage to the right as viewed by the audience.

A little trickier is the term "upstage" which was once literally "up" because the rear of the stage (farthest from the audience) was raised slightly to improve the viewing. Today the rear of the audience is raised, which produces the same effect, plus things don't roll off stage into the orchestra pit so often. "Upstage" as a verb means to usurp attention, which is what an actor did when he moved farther upstage than the person he was playing against. It's not so much that he would thereby be on higher ground as that he would oblige the actor dialoguing with him to turn away from the audience. Less skillful (and therefore less well paid) actors were called "hams" for the cheap hamfat they used to remove their makeup. Not all penurious actors are bad ones, of course, but the term survives its cosmetic origins (even people working for scale can afford cold cream today) due to its fortuitous association with "ham-handed" and other porcine metaphors for clumsy.

A favored performer spends most of his time "in the limelight," which is to say in the bright white light produced by playing a flame on cylinders of calcium oxide and magnesium oxide, or "lime."

Janette Greene Dollar
To Calm Your Mind

Spiritual Renewal

- A Mensan Prescription

Until recently, chronic emptiness is how I could describe all my life's problems. Caused by various traumas, neurological bugaboos, or what have you, the sum has been a serious lack of consistent purpose and meaning. As most in that situation eventually do, I decided I couldn't take any more. With sporadic momentary exceptions, my collections of razor blades, pills and other implements of potential destruction didn't quite hold the promise of relief I sought. Too proud to die a coward at least.

Instead, I took the lead of a friend who had been there and done that, packed everything I was told I would need into a single backpack, and embarked into the mountains of Colorado on a quest for completeness. I had reached a precipice in life, losing ground and knowing without a bridge I would surely fall to my death. By this point I was desperate just to know *-something*, *ANYTHING*, to be true. Through my own life's journey, I'd discovered feelings, ideas come and go, beliefs evolve and change, without exception if one keeps growing. So agonizingly frustrating and disillusioning, it wasn't my choice. I wanted to be sure of life and some of its meaning, but in the course of that growth, I discovered my ignorance. In Crestone, with the help of some wise counsel, I found my "something", this one thing, the only thing, I could be sure of.

It was a spiritual retreat aptly titled "Sacred Passage", which included several days of teachings, followed by a vision quest of sorts during six days of solo communion with nature. I had witnessed the peaceful, astonishing transformation of a friend who had gone through the program, and I wanted what he had. I returned 2 ½ weeks later, not with everything I had hoped for, but with all I needed. I hear tell The Oracle tells only what one needs to hear. The rest would be up to me. At the Gaia Sanctuary in the tiny town of Crestone, I received 11 simple answers to my problems. Principals to live by. Here are seven:

1. Understand and acknowledge that all things, both form and non-form are interconnected and interdependent.
2. Understand and acknowledge that all things, both form and non-form are constantly changing.
3. Consciously make the commitment to self-liberation and freedom from suffering in this lifetime, every day.
4. Decontract, relax.
5. Practice non-distraction and Presence.
6. Cultivate universal energy.
7. Rest with an open, radiant heart.

The embracing of ignorance has brought me peace. This is not to be confused with complacency. Growth is both the journey and the goal, revealing with every thing discovered, the seemingly expanding vastness of my ignorance.

No moment, no one thing can or will ever be duplicated wholly. It's important to understand that everything we know to be true and real, is comprised of the exact same thing. The stuff we are made of, break it down, then break that down, then break that down, then break that down, until witnessing that our one common source is energy, and this energy is without exception and without pause, changing form. It is growth, it is death, inanimate and living, it's all the same. As each drop in the ocean, it is all one, all divine. In principal, not coincidentally, both scientifically and spiritually sound.

Of the seven principals above, "Presence" would be the most transforming. It is the practice of living in the moment. It is the practicing of, when asking "Who am I?", answering without exception simply "I am", defined by only that

moment. Not "I was", or "I will be", but simply "I am". If we don't like what we are, we have the wondrous opportunity to be what we wish in the next moment, each and every time. I live by the motto "now or never", because every moment in it's turn is "now", there being no such thing as "never".

Presence is the art of non-distraction. Living every moment not distracted by past negativity or future worry, appreciating the wonder, the miracle in where we are and what we are doing. A time for every thing, revelry, sorrow, planning, toll, dancing; be present with it all. Non-distraction is a skill, garnered in the practice of "Cultivating Universal Energy", done through meditation.

Meditation has two benefits. It is cleansing, flushing out the emotional blockages we harbor (contraction), replacing them with clear insight, universal "chi" (allowing release, decontraction- relaxation, peace). The other is calming the mind. Learning, practicing shutting off the incessant chatter, the manipulative force that is the fallible human mind. Most of us have minds like a kite, carried on the wind, with our physical presence being the tail. It gets us into trouble, into emotional and practical turmoil. Meditation allows grasping of concepts not conceivable to the mind, divine insight. But it takes practice.

I see now my time spent in Crestone was merely an orientation. So much of what I've been taught since then I've found is second nature to many in my life. We are born ignorant of who we are. The advanced souls in my life hear my revelations and say *they've been trying to tell me these things!* However, they don't see the divine connectedness. I needed that to complete my personal puzzle. We each have to experience our own lessons, connect the dots on our own to achieve understanding. Just as my six year old can not grasp the complexities of long division, we too must serve our own time, each learn our own lessons to be able to grasp simple concepts. We must have patience and understanding with ourselves and each other. Simplicity is relative to where we are in our growth. We are all at different stages on the same path. I've discovered one of my own roles is to be a planter of seeds along that path, Not to cultivate, but to germinate mighty oaks and breathtaking blooms I may never see or recognize. There is tremendous satisfaction in that. We all plant some kind of seeds.

It all comes down to trust. By practicing these things, and reaching these understandings, we learn to let go of the reins. We learn to release the control, the irritants, the sorrow, detach from and observe it as what it really is. We learn that we can let go. It's in the letting go, the trusting in the divine order, that all we've sought and desire, all we've desperately reached out time and again to grasp and control in our lives, will come to us. We are fallible, your God is not.

All this talk is fun, but we are human, seeing is believing. I don't preach these things, I simply live them. I finally saw them by observing and interacting with another who simply lived them. Forget about blind faith. Recognize it in others, see it in practice, then trust.

Principals 8-11, I could not do justice here. They are available via your own sacred passage, guided by the good folks at "Sacred Passage & The Way of Nature", founded and run by the esteemed John P. Milton. They can be reached at (520) 432-7353. Or at <http://www.sacredway.com/>. Also, the incredible pictures from my own sacred passage and subsequent adventures in Colorado can be viewed at <http://members.tripod.com/~Msdollar/pics1>

Primer for the **December** Topic:

Y2K!

Back in the days when you could still see "Flower Children" without thinking "retro," the bright young men who were tinkering together the computer revolution made a momentous decision. They decided to cut a very small corner and allot just two bytes for the year instead of four. This seemed pretty sensible at the time since 1) the memory storage capacity of the typical computer was approximately that of an amoeba; 2) the digits "19__" were going to be repetitious for the next working career, and 3) surely somebody would make the necessary adjustments long before the turn of the next century.

(In fairness, it should be noted that not every Bright Young Person or company made these assumptions, but the ones who eventually dominated the market did.)

About a generation ago, some engineers "discovered" the Year Two Thousand Problem and wrote it up in some trade journals. They drew the following reactions:

- 1) Yes, there's going to be a problem; I'm sure someone will have a fix in time, though; these guys are pretty bright; they surely won't let something like that slip by.
- 2) Oh, that's just alarmist talk. If there is a problem -- which I doubt -- the Bright Boys are already working on the solution.
- 3) Problem? Oook see no problem. Computer work fine.

Ten years ago, someone noticed that no one had done any-thing to avert the Year Two Thou-sand Problem except to give it a snappy new name: Y2K. The more forward-thinking systems managers and engineers began to seriously consider what they would have to do to set matters to rights. At some point, it crossed their minds to alert the government. The government promptly...

- 1) Established study commissions to Report Findings and Make Recommendations;
- 2) Issued assurances that the matter was Well In Hand and that they were aggressively pursuing all avenues to achieve "compliance";
- 3) Quietly asked the Informa-tion Industry if them was anything they could do.

Over the past five years, Y2K pundits have grabbed print space (and, of course, e-space) by either poo-pooing the whole idea or predicting impressive scenarios of "Y2Kaos."

As we come down to the wire, concerned parties have make a number of quick fixes, system fixes and design fixes and, although they admit they don't know how many fixes they needed to make, or if they made the right ones, think that all their effort probably saved the day. Other, equally concerned parties have been stocking up dried food, fuel oil and ammunition for the cyber-holocaust when everything that depends on computer data-massage crashes and burns.

You don't have to belong to either camp, of course, but it would certainly make your writing more interesting if you have an opinion on just how bad (or not) this is going to be. The nifty thing about this sort of prognostication is that you won't have to wait long to see how accurate you were.

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