

Excerpts from the September 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.

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MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

It's the twenty-fourth of July and I'm just back from dropping off the August MIND at the printer's. I've bet myself that September is going to be a slim issue for contributions for two reasons: first, August was an especially good one, with seven contributors on the theme and three letters on the July material; second, due to the ExCom election, it will be printed early and many writers, accustomed to being accepted well after the announced deadline, will be caught flat-footed. We'll see if I'm right.

* * *

Well, it's 11 August and considering that I'll be pasting up this weekend, I think I win my bet.

* * *

Fresh Depravity on the Boob Tube

I see my editorial on the pernicious TV shows "Survivor" and "Big Brother" failed to shame the networks into repentance. What a surprise, eh? In fact, I think there's a next season offering based on the "traitor in our midst" concept. Well, this is just grand: perhaps by the Third Millennium (142 days and counting) we can be entertained by the logical fusion of the "screw your buddy" intrigue of the newcomers and the baited violence of the old standbys like Jenny Jones and Jerry Springer. The new generation of social dissolution shows could improve on their fore-bears by scheduling the off-screen murder for the season finale. I can even suggest some titles: how about "Stalag,"

"Copperhead" or "Scheme for Your Life"?

Our quadrennial Presidential season is upon us, which is a good time to reinforce a lesson all voters should know, namely that there is no policy so repugnant that it can't find advocates with altruistic sounding arguments. For example, here are some reasons actually given for a certain practice:

- It's an old established custom;
- All the women who've undergone it are in favor of it, and want their daughters to enjoy its benefits;
- It raises the girl's status, as it affirms her purity and bravery;
- It confers maturity and positive character traits, such as a submissive nature and endurance:
- The girl enjoys it because she's the center of attention;
- It creates a bond between generations; it's a rite of passage;
- It cures lustful thoughts and temptations such as masturbation;
- It avoids the heartbreak of premarital relations;
- It strengthens the marriage bond, since the wife learns to love her husband rather than lust for him;
- It abolishes rape;
- It removes the stress associated with sexual technique;
- It does away with infidelity, thus assuring better care of the children.

The advocate is touting female genital mutilation, as practiced by African Muslims.

Please do not write in to "rebut" these claims, however tempted you feel; similar ingenious and self-serving arguments are raised for everything from ADC to tobacco subsidies. The proper mindset for this sort of flack is the one that asks Cicero's question, "*Cui bono?*" -- or in modern English, "Who really benefits?"

LOCSECTION

Grace Falvey

This is the election edition, in which you are asked to vote for members of the new ExCom. And why, you well may ask, do we need an election when we have only nine candidates for nine positions? Wouldn't common sense dictate voting the nine candidates in by acclamation?

Not according to our RVC, Will Steinke. When I explained our situation to him, he asked what our ByLaws say about the election. When I told him they go into great detail about how elections shall be conducted, he said that makes us pretty much obliged to follow the rules and hold the election.

Actually, our ByLaws call for having eighteen candidates for the nine slots, as well as at least two people running for the office of LocSec. What is not mentioned is that the Nominating Committee might need a loaded gun to recruit that many people these days

Since nobody has agreed to be nominated for LocSec, Will said the new ExCom would have to decide for itself how leadership is to be accomplished. (I find it interesting that we are, perforce, going back to our old way of choosing a LocSec.)

Anyway, please do vote, no matter how difficult it will be to choose nine people

from this list: Janette Dollar, George Dunn, Carol Eubanks, Dom Jervis, Peggy Sargent, Dave Tess, Jim Thurston, Nancy White and Adren Yates.

There has been some talk about changing our traditional way of handling our monthly meetings. Specifically, the suggestion was to gather for dinner in a private room at a restaurant, and to have our program afterwards. This is not likely to happen.

Greg Crawford has done extensive research on the restaurant situation, and he has come up with only one suitable location: a Chinese place on the west side. There's just one big problem. It is a buffet, so one pays a flat rate when entering. That would make it impossible for anyone who did not wish to eat dinner with the group to attend the meeting and hear the speaker.

The other objection to this plan has been voiced by many members to whom I have spoken. At any restaurant, they say, one finds it difficult to circulate and talk with everyone in the room. Conversation is limited to one's table mates.

It was an interesting idea, but it doesn't seem destined to fly.

RVC.Comm by Will Steinke

In case you missed it, this year's Annual Gathering was held in Philadelphia July 5-9. This is Mensa's biggest event of the year. We hold the Annual Business Meeting there, then there is, of course a quarterly American Mensa Committee (AMC) meeting and there is a PARTY. There are loads of speakers, many friends and food. Oh, the food! Hospitality was well stocked, actually there was so much food that, at the end of the gathering, the organizers held a yard sale to dispatch the unopened cases. Since this was the beginning of my vacation, I picked up a lot of bargains. We then visited my family who lives near Philadelphia and they reaped the rewards of my bargain hunting.

Some noteworthy events occurred at this gathering. Greg Crawford of Central Indiana received a Chairman's award for his Mensa activities involving the community. Speaking of Community Activities, DeDe Tredinnick distributed the Community Activities Program awards. The CultureQuest XI winners were announced. The number one team was the Rocket Surgeons from Middle Tennessee Mensa, a three-person team composed of Captain Eileen Steinhice, O. Christopher Steinhice and Charles Steinhice. Tied for sixth was the Arch Rival from St. Louis, and in tenth place was the Dream Team from Mensa of Wisconsin. Finally there was the Publications Recognition Program awards (aka the news-letter awards). I have listed our region's nominees and winners.

Service

--*Calendar*

ChiMe, Chicago Carol F. Mason, Editor

--*Reporting*

ChiMe

--*Membership Roster*

ChiMe

Mensagenda, Minnesota Jane Gmur, Editor - **WINNER**

Presentation

--*Blue Pencil*

ChiMe

Mensagenda - **WINNER**

--*Artwork*

ChiMe - **WINNER**

Mensagenda

--*Photography*

ChiMe - **WINNER**

Entertainment

--*Puzzles and Games*

Mensagenda - **WINNER**

--*Fiction*

MIND, Central Indiana George Dunn, Editor

--*Poetry*

Mensagenda - **WINNER**

MIND

--*Overall Entertainment*

Mensagenda - **WINNER**

Individual Achievement

--*Puzzles and Games*

ChiMe, Puzzles, J. Mark Thompson ("Egyptian Fractions," "Hip Solitaire,"
"Letter Labyrinths")

Mensagenda, Donna's Diary Donna Myhrer - **WINNER**

Wiscom, Wisconsin, Robert J. Swiderski, Editor, Puzzles, Ruby Ferraro

--*Poetry*

Mensagenda, Before the Cold Rhoda Erhardt

MIND, Basil, Basil Wentworth (Letters of Mark III, Silas is Golden IV - Tools of
the Trade - **WINNER**

--*Artwork*

ChiMe, untitled, Rick Carpenter covers - **WINNER**

Mensagenda, untitled, Sarah Gilbert cover

--*Essay*

ChiMe, Cemeteries Aren't Just for Halloween, Karen "kiki" Kruse

--*Continuing Item*

ChiMe, Cheap Eats, Cynthia Clampett

--*Editorial*

MIND, My Piece of MIND, George Dunn

--*Local Secretary's Column*

ChiMe, Al-literations, Alan Baltis - **WINNER**

Special Mention

MIND - Most Unusual Details About Newsletter Content. "Literary Facts."

George Dunn, Editor A clever takeoff on those familiar Nutrition Facts, it gives
new meaning to "Table of Contents." - **WINNER**

SangaMensa - Most Creative Placement of Quotes. Eddie Ward, Editor.

Clever, Innovative placement on pages allows inclusion of quotes without
appearing to be space filler or segment dividers.

Newsletter Owl

Large Group: ChiMe, Chicago Carol F. Mason, Editor

Web Page Award Nominees

--*Most Effective Use of Graphics*

Chicago Area Mensa, the Chicago Web Team, www.chicago.us.mensa.org --

WINNER

Minnesota Mensa, Alan Heigi, Webmaster, www.mnmensa.org

--*Most Effective Use of Text*

Minnesota Mensa

--*Local Group Representation*

Minnesota Mensa

--*Most Revisitable*

Minnesota Mensa

There you have it Newsletter fans.

On a sad note, long time member, former RVC and Second Vice Chair David Mann of New Hope, Alabama died in his sleep Sunday morning. Joe Zanca, who usually auctions off a \$5 bill, initiated a collection drive to fund a MEAF Scholarship in David's name. By the end of the AG over \$4,000 had been raised for the David Mann Memorial Fund.

Please give to this fund, if for no other reason than to honor the man(n) who is said to have started the Mensa greeting of hugging. He also ran the first hugging contest. Send your contributions to the David Mann Memorial Fund, c/o MERF, 1229 Corporate Drive W., Arlington, TX 76006-6103

Until next time, have fun and be safe.

Will

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Comments on the July "Gun Control" issue: (1) David Vaprin was admirably even-handed, but there's no such thing as licensing a right. Privileges can be licensed. (2) Robert Allen Harper's idea was creative, but an eight-pound trigger pull on handguns would make them useless for self-defense by the weak and destroy the accuracy even of skilled marksmen.

Name Withheld appeals to the need for government to keep up with the times, but seems uninterested in the method the Founders provided -- a Constitutional amendment process. This [method] has proved bothersome for social engineers, who have hit upon the expedient of claiming changes in the meaning of the words of the Constitution -- a daring and creative notion, but wholly illegitimate.

Gun rights, however, exist independent of the Constitution. They are among the inalienable rights belonging to all persons by their very nature: the right to life and liberty and the consequent right to defend them against criminals and tyrants. The Founders proclaimed a new model of governance -- not a people in bondage to authority, but a people free to honestly and peacefully run their own lives, [the people] delegating (but retaining ownership of) a very few powers to a government charged with one job only: protecting those individual rights. If that government even got too uppity, the people proclaimed their right and duty to overthrow it by force of arms. In so doing, they would be acting in their capacity as members of the militia.

The entry for "Militia" in MIND's "Gun Debate Lexicon" says there is no absolute definition for the term -- true, in that people today disagree on the meaning, but there has never been any honest confusion over what the Founders meant by it. The militia is the armed populace, period, end of story. Richard Henry Lee's first draft of the Second Amendment, as approved by the House, actually contained the words "composed of the body of the People"; the redundancy was eliminated in the Senate. Today's confusion over the Second Amendment's introductory clause evaporates when the original meanings of the words are applied: "a free State" requires an armed populace that is "well-regulated (trained in the effective use of arms and in the coordinated execution of orders) and thus capable of repelling invaders and tyrants alike You and I are supposed to own and master modern military

weaponry [see US v, Miller]. Nothing has changed that, and nothing could change it.

From the Founders' solemn promise that Americans would never be prevented from protecting their lives and liberty, we have come along way. That promise has been replaced by the de facto requirement that we never protect ourselves when a government official might respond in time to draw the chalk lines and string up the crime scene tape? This is a reversion to the old political model of a people who can't be trusted, but must be controlled by authority.

If you believe it's better to have dead (or raped, mutilated or traumatized) but "civilized" victims instead of living non-victims possessing deadly force, I suggest you place a sign on your door proclaiming, "This is a Gun-Free Home; you have 20-30 minutes to kill, rape, rob or torture us before the cops come -- unless you cut the phone lines first."

Ms. Withheld - may I call you "Name"? - let me assure you that both sides of this issue want a civilized society. The problem is that some people refused to be civilized. You can't wish that away; you can either deal with it or not. Gun ownership isn't about testosterone or going [Blambi*](#); it is about protecting the innocent from the uncivilized -- especially those who pretend the extortion, bondage and terrorism are fine if committed by government agents.

The Editor wrote, "The advocate [of disarmament] always trusts himself and those agents that seem to be under his control." I believe that this is dead wrong. It is precisely because they don't trust themselves with firearms that people can't trust their neighbors, and want "professionals" to exercise a monopoly on deadly force.

Social psychologists discovered long ago that people have a number of heuristic biases: they tend to believe that their opinion reflects that of the majority; to attribute their successes to personal virtues and their failures to bad luck while seeing others' successes as luck and their failures as weakness or bad character. They tend, similarly, to view themselves more favorably than they do others.

If you don't trust yourself to touch an AK-47, how comfortable are you with armed neighbors? Maybe shooting can be done by professionals -- but ordinary folks?

Weapons Weapons handling isn't brain surgery. Ordinary folks are trainable in the safe and effective use of firearms for self-defense. Children of single-digit age can be taught to use everything from .22 revolvers to machine guns. Such training was standard for 12-year-old boys until about 1900. It taught them caution, observation, temperance, respect and responsibility.

The safest place you can be is a gun range, where there are fewer injuries than at bowling alleys, pool halls, grammar schools, homes or even police stations. The environment demands and breeds responsibility and competence.

News flash: Whenever a crime is committed against your person, someone is right there who can respond immediately on your behalf. Don't believe me? Look in a mirror.

Kent Van Cleve

A former Mensa Bulletin Editor, Kent is a doctoral student in Philosophy at Indiana University. His Master's Thesis was in the field of MetaEthics.

* The term "Blambi" was coined by Mr. Van Cleve, who would appreciate credit when it is shared with others.

[Kent's letter was edited for length - Ed]

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 mhetzler@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/
Oct 27 - 29	HalloweeM 25, the Ag RG , Northbrook, IL (hotel not yet selected) ; Registration: \$50 to 8/31; \$55 to 9/30; \$60 after; Registrar Bill Slankard, 1909 Birchwood Ave. Arlington Heights, IL 60004-3501 registrar@chicago.us.mensa.org
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 \$55 to 10/31, %60 after, contact C. E. Reutter, _____ Cincinnati, OH 45220; (513)____-____; email: ReutterCE@aol.com [Note change from Andy Badger]

*** 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

Individual Achievement

Poetry

Basil Wentworth

"Basil"

MIND

Central Indiana Mensa

George Dunn, Editor

American Mensa, Ltd.

2000 Publications Recognition Program

B _____

A _____

S _____

I _____

L _____

by **Basil Wentworth**

from **RATS!**, a musical comedy

DIRTY WORDS

The world is full of special words our parents never told us,
And when we say those special words, they get all mad and scold us.
And when I ask them why these words are bad, they go all shirty,
And will not tell, except to say those special words are dirty.

My father sometimes says these words when Mother isn't near him,
But I will get my mouth washed out if all I do is hear them.
And once my mother said a word that she won't let me utter,
And when I asked her what it meant, she answered with a mutter.

So mother muttered like a martyr that it mightn't matter
If now and then a grownup should include them in his chatter.
But when I pressed the question, then the irony got bolder;
She said, as always, "you will understand it when you're older."

The moral is: though it's a crime to speak in words obscener,
If you're not caught before your prime, it's merely misdemeanor.
Adulthood makes all things sublime; the pastures all are greener,
And while some things get soiled with time--
The dirty words get cleaner.

Dick Goodhart

Free Speech and Moral Consensus

One of America's most cherished rights is that of free speech. This right sets us apart from most other nations and its history is (should be) well known by all educated Americans. This right, guaranteed by the First Amendment, was a major proposal of the Enlightenment philosophers and in one form or another is found in many Eighteenth Century constitutional proposals. It appears, for

example, in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, which was a major document of the French Revolution.

That part of the Declaration might be paraphrased as, "All men are to be free in their speech and actions, but must bear responsibility for these." That hook at the end probably seemed a sensible exception at the time, but helped lead to the Terror, Robespierre and Napoleon. The fact that our guarantee has no such exceptions built in has made American history very interesting and has helped preserve those freedoms we still enjoy.

The right to free speech is, however, a legal and political right, which means that it enjoys all the legal red tape and boundaries which are customary in our system. You have, for example, the right to express your opinion, but not to libel or slander or be pornographic, (as these exceptions are currently defined). Of course, all rights such as this ultimately rest on social convention. Even freedom itself depends on the current social definition. I suppose a discussion of the limits of free speech (or any freedom) will ultimately get down to freedom from social control, which always has limits. Another definition of freedom might include the actual freedom to do something (e.g., handicapped access to public buildings, or free medical care, but that is another debate.

Social control in our multi-group society seems to fluctuate and is continually tested, generally by some fringe group or other. The limits of personal freedom and choice are often unclear, especially if there is no consensus if there are widely held, violently differing viewpoints (e.g., Abortion, Gun Control, School Prayer, etc.)

Recently, there seems to be a vague understanding of the social limits concept, it is that is what is meant by the phrase "politically correct." This seems to be a rather cynical realization that our free speech rights might not be what we expect. While political correctness might limit insensitive speech of majority groups, the implication that everyone must adhere to the current majority definitions of correctness so as not to offend anyone is, after all, contrary to what the whole idea of free speech is about.

The rational arguments for limiting seem to rest upon the idea that society has the ultimate right to set its own rules. Presumably the society can accord its members certain freedoms but it always retains the right to define their limits. In America, that seems to depend on the political makeup of the Supreme Court as far as legal freedoms go while social consensus pretty much determines moral and social freedoms. If you don't like swearing and obscenities on TV and in the park, object to unwed mother/ fatherhood, or gay marriages, to cite some areas where social approval seems to have changed recently, you'd better figure out how to alter consensus.

One real freedom that Americans enjoy is relative freedom from institutionalized moral control. Religion is the institution of moral/social control in most societies but we have no state church and Americans seem to have an aversion to religious interference, so much so that that part of the First Amendment has been turned on its head and instead of protecting religious groups from state control, it protects the state and all its institutions from any association with religion.

Lacking religious consensus and direction, we are left to our own devices. Politics and Government do a poor job of moral arbitration and smart politicians stay as far from moral commitment on controversial issues as they can. The right to free speech guarantees a continuous lively debate about all moral differences.

The institution best fitted... The social institution of education is probably the

best fitted in our society to handle the thorny Issues of moral consensus and has done a middling good job throughout our history but few (very few) teachers are trained to handle normative consensus development and when they try they are, of course attacked by most sides of any really important moral question.

Society being what it is (becoming), social change with all its moral redefinitions is inevitable. Special interest groups will continue to struggle for their viewpoints and a sort of fluid consensus will be reached, probably without satisfying any particular group. As social change seems to be rapid and continuous, Americans will probably not have a chance to become comfortable with their new world before it again redefines itself.

ExCom Elections Instructions

O.K., here's the drill: to vote in the Central Indiana Mensa Executive Committee election, you need to follow the procedures below.

1. Mark the ballot with between your 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)

[Those of you readers who are inclined to examine things - which should be ALL of you; after all, you're Mensans - have doubtless noted that there are nine positions on the ExCom and nine announced candidates, which may give you to wonder if this is more of a formality than a chance to influence history. Well, you're right. However, there are two reasons that you should vote. First, participation in elections is a measure, and a good one, of the involvement of the membership: we'd like to find it high. Second, it does afford an opportunity to show support for particular candidates and by comparison, to give wakeup calls to others. A proposed change to our Bylaws (on which you'll be voting) provides for a smaller ExCom, which means that in the future your powers of decision may be called upon. May as well get in practice.]

[new feature](#)

THE CANTERING CURMUDGEON

A Grumpy Look at Modern Life

Time was, a stock character for comedy relief was the old coot with the ear trumpet who drove everybody nuts going, "eh? EH?" Today we not longer make fun of the hard of hearing but we still have people driving us nuts with

their requests that we repeat ourselves, only now they're the people who let the batteries run down in their cordless phones.

Call the published number for a hotel and you're answered by a clerk who asks you why you're calling (sometimes politely, sometimes not). When you say you want a room, he acts surprised and says, as though shocked by your poor sense of direction, "I'll have to connect you to our `Reservations' Desk." Why else would someone call a hotel if not for a room? Wouldn't it make more sense to publish the Reservations number and let THEM refer the occasional caller who was lost and wanted to know if he was north or south of the place when he could see the I-70 exit?

Have you noticed how the short-term memory of someone with a form to fill shrinks to ONE BLOCK of that form. Really: give a clerk your name when she's ready to fill in your Area Code, and she has to ask for your name again. It's not just that she isn't sure of the syllables; she really doesn't remember getting it; you can tell by her tone of voice.

Here's an emotional relief maneuver for dealing with those fast-food people who "suggest" that you actually wished to place a bigger order: say, "I don't think so: please read that order back to me."

Bet you thought telemarketers call you by your first name to create familiarity, right? Uh-uh: they do it to irritate you because Irritated people are more suggestible.

Speaking of telephones, there's a rule of etiquette that should be enforced at every opportunity: The caller identifies himself first. The stranger who begins the conversation by asking who YOU are (or if you're at home) doesn't deserve the courtesy of a reply.

We all know there are two types of bad drivers: lunatics, who drive faster than you do, and morons, who drive slower. Still, you have to wonder about the guy who, as he passes, blows his horn and continues to blow it as he speeds away. Who is he alerting?

Finally, here's a sight that brings tears of mirth to my eyes: one of those luxury yuppie cars parked wrong-angle diagonal across two or three slots -- with a nice big old rusty flatbed snuggled up to the driver's door beside it!

Dom Jervis

Clearing My Conscience

I cannot bear this burden any longer. Despite the fact that I am certain to suffer ostracism by the power elite of Central Indiana Mensa (CIM) for divulging one of its deepest, darkest, dirtiest little secrets, I must do so. I can only hope that my effort here will not be in vain, and that it will result in positive action on your part. I am referring to the monthly event known as MINDBending.

You might be thinking, "What's so secret about that? It's advertised in MIND every month." This is true, but this is what they do not tell you, and I will

IT'S FUN!!

There, I said it, and I feel better already. For some reason, the powers-that-be

don't want anyone to know how much fun MINDBending is until they actually experience it. Why, I do not know, but there is no reason that it needs to be this way. Nowhere in the monthly notice is it mentioned that this is one of the most enjoyable activities that CIM has to offer.

When I attended my first MIND-Bending, I'd surmised that it was a laborious chore, devoid of any enjoyment, that just had to be done. This was not the case. I had a great time! Yes, we worked, but we also enjoyed food, fellowship, laughs, hugs, and a feeling of accomplishment in communicating our group's news to our fellow Mensans and friends. A few of us even stayed afterward and played board games. I No Admission Charge!

Unlike monthly meetings, there is no admission charge. The work is neither difficult nor exhausting. Our Editor, Publisher and regulars have devised methods to simplify the process, so no experience is necessary. The more participants, the less work each needs to do. In fact, if enough people attend, the work is actually done in shifts. Those not working at the moment just party until one of the workers needs a break. Can you believe that?

Some may have considered attending, but decided not to due to a concern that only a certain clique is really welcome at this event. Nothing could be further from the truth! Believe me, I know about Mensa cliques. Just ask me about my former local chapter, which does not even have this event. Cliques simply do not exist at MINDBending. You are more than welcome, consider yourself enthusiastically asked to join us!

As I said, I have risked being branded an outcast by telling you all of this. What do you have to lose by trying it once? The worst that can happen is that you do not have a good time, unlikely as this is. If that is the case, then you could gloat about my being wrong. That is what I'm willing to risk to prove to you that MINDBending could become your favorite CIM activity, as it is mine.

How about it? Will you try it once? What do you say?

Later, the Tuscarora

George Dunn

License and Liberty

Every recognized liberty is pretty much the child of a previous tyranny. The American concern for allowing everyone to speak his mind owes its vitality to the British fascination with sedition and the steps the Crown took to crush it.

Though you'd hardly know it by reading their tabloids today, Britain at the time of the Revolution was a class system balanced on an empire in which every creature had its place on the hierarchy, from the bluest blood down to the childlike savages on whom the British Sun never completely set.

In such an arrangement the worst of crimes was getting above one's station, because that tended to destabilize the whole beautiful arrangement, and the easiest way to "presume" was to criticize some one of higher rank.

The crucial element of the crime was not the accuracy of the statement, or even its motive, but the relative social standings of the critic and the criticized. It might be quite common knowledge, say, that Lord Folderol was a lecherous ass, but the dairyman who said so in public took his life in his hands. After all, it is only our superiors who may look down on us, so if such trivial matters as character or conduct reversed the relationships established by bloodline and

royal favor, why, the very Empire was in peril!

Americans, accustomed to distinguishing between classes only on the basis of wealth and education, and at some pains not to make too much of those, perceived that a little irreverence toward their fellow mortals was no great threat.

This is not to say that they flung the gates open to every form of expression. Blasphemy against the Deity was very bad form, and often punishable by law; libel, slander and defamation were recognized offenses and people were sanctioned for what we today would call "hate speech" and "fighting words." Coarse speech around women and children was little tolerated and malicious gossip was on a par with public drunkenness and mistreating a horse.

The sole British oppression of speech which the Americans abolished was the one that protected the mighty from the critique of the humble.

Words have power. They may offend, annoy, deceive, anger, dishearten, incite and abet mischief and from the consequences of these effects they should not be totally exonerated on the basis that there is "freedom of speech."

Issues of content, such as those of pornography, obscenity, racism, military security, privacy, art, flag-burning, rap lyrics and so on need to be considered on that basis and not crowded beneath an umbrella of "Free Speech." No freedom can be unlimited because its unchecked exercise can trample the freedoms of others. By the same token, no one should be able to restrict another's freedom with out some showing of potential injury therefrom.

British censorship protected the government and its favored people from the presumption of the common subjects. American officials are fair game for any concerned citizen.

Sometimes we let the citizens get away with too much because we think that restricting them in anything is a step on the slippery slope to Imperial repression.

Not so.

David

How do you say goodbye to a friend? I just found out yesterday that David Mann had a heart attack and died Saturday night at the AG in July. It is amazing what you miss by just missing one AG. The chance to get one last hug from a truly wonderful person, the chance to actually tell him how much I have appreciated his friendship; both of those are gone now.

I am terribly envious of all the people out there who know what they want to do with their lives from an early age, and do it. David was one of those people. I think all he ever wanted to do was to work for NASA and that is what he did. He enjoyed working on his house, creating a beautiful environment for himself and Linda. He was always telling me about the current project he was working on.

I think I was there when he first met his wife Linda. I know that he loved her very much and enjoyed her company greatly. He seemed to be a true romantic. Last year for their anniversary he arranged to give her one gift a day

for each year that they had been together.

Some of my earliest memories of Mensa include David. With his beautiful voice and wonderful southern accent he could make the driest statistics fun to listen to. He was a truly wonderful hugger, giving just the right amount of hug and attention without going too far or being too hesitant, and all the time there would be this wonderful purr coming from him which seemed to invite you to relax even more.

I often thought of David as "Mr. Mensa." He seemed to always be serving Mensa in some form or another. He was great dealing with the press and in helping to teach the rest of us to deal with the press. His even temper and quiet charm made him one of the best people for defusing potentially bad situations. He had an honest friendship that he seemed to offer everyone.

One of my most recent memories of him is sitting with him and Linda at the `99 AG as people were coming in to register. He sat there, talking with us and watching the people walk by. He would smile and wave at anyone whose attention he could get, then he would invite them over, introduce them around and tell each of us something about the others, inviting us all to become friends.

It is hard to imagine a Mensa Gathering, especially an AG, without him. I guess we will all just have to comfort each other and know that our lives have been blessed by having known him.

In the end, I guess I'm not willing to say, "goodbye." I believe in life after death, so David, wherever you are, save a hug for me.

Beverly Fields

Donations to a David Mann Scholarship Fund may be sent to MERF, 1229 Corporate Drive West, Arlington TX 76006-6103. Mark checks "David Mann Memorial."

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			♥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

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