

Excerpts from the January 1999 MIND

The Newsletter of

[Central Indiana Mensa](#)

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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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MIND Archives

MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

King in a Nutshell

I write these words in the O-dark-hundreds of 23 November, as I red-eye the December MIND. Perhaps I will rewrite them before this goes to the printer, but at least they will be my reminder until then.

It seems only a moment ago I was wailing to a friend about how contemptuous people were of my attempts to set deadlines and how much extra effort it cost me. I didn't get much sympathy, nor, on reflection, did I deserve any. As my friend pointed out, I, being the Editor, am the king of this tiny kingdom and my "subjects" only abuse me because I let them. (I'm not referring to *all* the contributors, and the decent ones know who they are.)

When I joined Mensa, long, long ago, the newsletter was pretty much just the Editor's private forum and it was a real turn-off. I have always yearned to have a members' dialogue on these pages, and to that end, I published a number of pieces I thought were plain goofy because even the most astute opinion (mine, naturally) isn't good enough to represent the whole Group. I try to rein people in on excessive length and really bad taste, but that's it.

Under the influence of this desire to give everybody his or her say, I've tolerated people who acted as though my trouble was no trouble. Asked to mail their articles to a PO Box before a monthly date, they persist in handing me notes, telling me telephone stories and offering to pipe data through my nonexistent fax or modem days after the deadline.

I can fill this newsletter. The AMC sends me scads of ads, minutes, statistics and other groups' reprints to take up space. I can also count on some members to write on their personal philosophies and analyses at length. I also have crackpot theories of my own sufficient to cover the white spaces on any number of pages.

If they wish, Central Indiana Mensans can have the same sort of relationship with the MIND that members of the National Geographic Society have with

their publication: they can read it or just stack it in the garage, but they don't have to contribute to it. No one (except the LocSec, the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer, the Calendar Editor and the Publisher) is *obliged* to send me material. Those who do so anyway have my gratitude.

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Speaking of hierarchies, the LocSec was telling me about five (5) local M's who volunteered to head up a new SIG, but none of whom were willing to *attend* said SIG under the headship of any of the other four. Sounds like a problem.

With our annual Big Event, the RG, at hand, it seems worthwhile to remind us all that, cute sayings about herding cats notwithstanding, success requires that some people accept direction from others. That does not mean the workers are inferior to the leaders; quite the reverse. It's easy to "contribute" in a starring role, but it takes extra dedication to play the supporting parts. We need to reward our workers. The grandstanders? "They have their reward."

Unity Commitment Purpose

LOCSECTION

GREG CRAWFORD

Advice. George's theme for this MIND could not have been more timely. You would never believe how much Mensa folk like to give advice. I have been getting more advice than I can handle: most well intentioned, with much of it being less than practical. Perhaps a few examples will shed some light.

It has been widely announced that we are seeking a new monthly meeting space, having outgrown our current facility. At least nine members have advised the obvious: let's move to a different apartment clubhouse. Not one considered we have precious few apartment dwellers within our group and that those clubhouses have already been checked out.

Then there is the Mensan who advised we move to the Columbia Club, the Athenaeum or the Crystal Yacht Club. Evidently, she was unaware of how much these venues cost and how limited our budgets are, especially for the numerous members who are retired, disabled, un- or underemployed or otherwise on a limited budget.

So much for the easy answers. In both cases, a little fact-finding first would have been in order. Some time-consuming follow-through would have been appreciated as well. But those are much harder to give than advice. And much more valuable.

Another example of Mensa advice came from the member who -- with a pop in one hand and foodstuffs in the other -- was telling how we had run out of beer. He advised we would lose attendance if we did not do better. He added, "Having enough is so easy, there is no excuse for running short." When asked if he would make a trip to the grocery, he emphatically replied, "No. I want to enjoy the meeting; why don't you get someone else to do it?"

Then there are those members who have advised new Mensa programs and expansions of current events. Generally, these are the same folks who want some new procedure or some new member service. Almost invariably, their response is, "I think it's a good idea, but I just don't have the time to help. But

it needs to get done (by somebody else)."

Both groups do not realize Mensa is all volunteer and only works as well as the commitment its members make.

There are other examples -- my favorite being the member who spent 2 1/2 hours in a monologue telling me I don't listen -- but you get my points. And if you don't, here they are in black and white: First, get to know our group, its manpower and budget limitations, its members, its needs and its history before proffering advice. Second, don't advise unless you plan to commit. That means your time and your efforts, not those of others. Bottom line: if you won't invest, please don't advise. Those of us who are working can better use the time elsewhere.

LET'S DO IT!

LETTERS

Greetings to all Indianapolis Mensans:

Thanks for all of your cards, visits and concern following my stroke.

I have been since discharged and am now at home recuperating. I'm going to outpatient therapy three days a week, and fellow Mensan Don Hargraves has moved in from Lansing, Michigan to care for me.

We plan to make it to the Indianapolis RG. Hope to see you there.

Joanne Ortman

Nancy White

On Advice

Why do we give advice? Primarily, I believe, because that the advice we are giving would be of help to the recipients. Secondarily, and not as nobly, we sometimes give advice that we know will be ignored, so, when the rejecting recipient has the problem we anticipate, we won't feel guilty. Or, at least, less guilty when we tell ourselves, "I did my best to prevent this; my best just wasn't good enough." OK, the second category is self-serving but, if the advice is good and sensible, doesn't harm the advisee, and lets you sleep better, acknowledge it for what it is and get ready to help your friend when the problems you anticipated occur. In my opinion, if you cared enough to offer advice, then you care enough to help with the consequences when the advice is ignored -- have the first aid kit handy; find out who the best available divorce lawyer is, keep on hand an adequate supply of chocolate, favorite beverages and a large box of tissue; etc. and whatever.

Are there rules for giving advice? Yes, I think that there are.

Rule #1: Resist the urge to "fix it" quickly. LISTEN to your friend, ask questions, let them vent, get their whole story. Often times, just the process of letting it all out allows the person with the problem become the problem-solver so your skills in that area aren't needed. Of course, this is ideal. And it shouldn't be too surprising for, after all, don't you select people for friends who are as bright as you are?

Rule #2: Scoldings aren't advice. Neither are sermons, lectures or threats.

Getting advice should be a positive thing for the advisee; receiving the advice should be free of elements of negativity. Disguising a scolding as advice is not only dishonest, it's cruel.

Rule #3: Advice isn't really advice unless it's useful. If the person you've advised doesn't understand you or doesn't know how to implement your advice, or you haven't really given them advice, you've just added to their frustrations.

Rule #4: Assume the person to whom you've given the advice has already tried the obvious solutions. Accept that a response of, "I've already tried that." is valid and not a rejection of your advice but a call for you to think harder and try to come up with advice not previously heard and tried. If an obese female friend is complaining of her lack of a love life, telling her "Lose the weight!" violates Rules 1 - 4; urging her to sign on to the Internet site called Big Beautiful Women Match-maker is advice. Be creative.

Like most of us, I've received tons of advice, lots of it good, and, sooner or later, I've actually heeded quite a bit of it. When I started thinking about which was the best advice of all of the many pieces of good advice I've received, I felt overwhelmed until I recognized a common thread, one that encompassed most of the rest - To Thine Own Self Be True.

[Hmmm. It almost seems that advice must be congenial, even at the cost of being objectively sound. Of course, if advice is so hard to hear that it isn't taken, then what advantage is there in its being sound? On the other hand, what good is advice which only mollifies a correctable situation? -Ed]

Dave Huey

Free Advice

Free advice is worth exactly what you pay for it.

Well, yeah, usually. But once in a while free advice can turn out to be worth more than money itself. The best advice I ever received was in 1990 when I came to work with an excruciating toothache and my left cheek visibly swollen. My boss, George, told me I should go to the dentist. I said I didn't need to, and he ignored me. He walked into my office, called his dentist, and made an appointment for me that afternoon. I went, and after six weeks, three root canals, three crowns and about five new fillings, my mouth was healthier (and happier) than it had been in 15 years.

I guess the above example is an illustration not only of advice, but also of coercion and unfair domination by management. Even so, I thank George every time I talk to him.

The worst advice I ever received was from someone who said, "Go ahead, Dave, just try one cigarette. It makes you feel light-headed! If you don't like it, you don't have to smoke any more." I don't blame that friend for my smoking habit, though. It was I who chose to take the advice.

It's funny, though - usually when someone gives me unsolicited advice and I don't follow the advice, they get angry with me, when it was they who offered the advice. If I tell you to use your turn signal and you don't do it, it doesn't harm me at all (unless I'm your passenger, maybe). It only puts you in danger. Why in the world would I be upset? I guess it's an ego thing with some people.

I try not to give anyone advice unless I think they're in danger. To me, offering gratuitous advice is like saying, "Since it's obvious you don't know how to run your own life and I do, here's a tip from me to you." (Hey, that rhymes! Maybe Basil can use that.)

[Dave seems to have had two experiences out of the mode: the pedestrian tendency would be for Boss George to claim the credit for Dave's good teeth rather than Dave entending it, while many people would find it quite reasonable to blame their pusher "friend" for their addiction.]

Boss George definitely went beyond the usual understanding of "advice" and took direct, coercive, action to see that his advice was implemented. Things turned out superbly, so George deserves praise not only for good advice, but for his own confidence in it, an element absent from the ordinary sort of "liability-free" recommendation.

Suppose - heaven forfend - that Dave had suffered some "therapeutic misadventure" in the chair of George's dentist. Would Dave (or his heirs) have been able to resist the representations of Dewey, Cheatem & Howe to nail George's company for grossly irresponsible endangerment?

It's the very low engagement, "non-Georgic" nature of most advice that gives the advice-givers the feeling that they have full deniability for the consequences. What's that expression every con artist uses on "60 Minutes" -- "I didn't put a gun to his head"?

This might be a good spring-board for a future topic: when is it appropriate to take action when advice isn't heeded? -Ed]

MJ Tala

Advice

Ah, yes, advice. One of the few commodities that can almost always be gotten for free, and is frequently worth every penny. I refer not only to advice that is not worth heeding, but the worthy advice that we ignore. After all, what is a coat worth if you never wear it, an umbrella that you leave at home, or a car you never drive? Regardless of price, if unused, it is still worthless.

On the other hand, I find that I have a life full of advice I felt no pull to heed, until it became, sometimes painfully, relevant, years or decades later. My parents told me, apropos of other children resenting my refusal to share homework or test answers, that "your real friends will like you, no matter what." What they forgot to add was that real friends would never ask. I knew very little about real friends until I became immersed in Mensa. No hyperbole here: I simply never had very many friends of any depth. I have found people who, inexplicably, have put up with me at my worst, as well as rejoicing at my best, for no other reason than, "That's what friends are for."

When I was a girl, my mother told me that I didn't need makeup, that I was young and pretty, and that makeup made you look older. Well, of course; that was precisely my goal. When I *got* older, though, it became perfectly plain that she was right, and now I knew that older was definitely *not* how I wanted to look. (Pay attention, children of all ages: your parents are almost always right, eventually.)

Sometimes you get the same advice over and over again, as you make the same stupid moves over and over. Caveats against loving jerks, not loving

yourself, wasting time regretting things better forgotten. Sooner or later (usually later) you discover the efficacy of that advice -- frequently, the hard way. I heard the best advice I have ever taken a half a dozen times before I finally acted on it. My then-fiance told me many times to "get out and don't come back." I only took half that advice until December, 1996, when I finally acted on both suggestions. Sound advice it turned out to be, indeed. Those of you who know the story will agree, I'm sure.

I almost always write these things in one fit of creativity, usually at the last possible minute, and, this time, I'm glad I did, as I had the opportunity to give some advice, and see instant and glad results. I was grocery shopping, and, in the floral department, a 20-something young man was asking the clerk what color roses he ought to buy for his date, who would be wearing a burgundy dress. She told him she didn't know what to tell him, so I offered, "White. Definitely white." The clerk then said, "Or yellow." I told both of them that blue-based and yellow-based colors clash. "White and burgundy," I said, "will look like snow and roses." "I like that." the young man declared. Turning to the clerk, he said, "It's white, then," and to me he said, brightly, "Thank you!" I left the store grinning widely.

[Therein lies a major motivation for giving advice: getting some appreciation for it. Of all such, this is probably the most decent. "I'm only telling you this for your own good" probably would hold that honor, except for its so often being untrue. -Ed]

Rhoda Israelov, Program Chair

Program Preview - First Quarter Lineup

January

SHERLOCK IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

C. Tim Wilcox, President of International Investigators, Inc. will be our speaker. Mr. Wilcox is an acknowledged expert in electronic eavesdropping countermeasures, in the development of the voice stress analyzer, and in intelligence gathering. International Investigators fights theft, vandalism and fraud on behalf of its many corporate and private clients. Tim states as his primary objective "catching people doing things they're not supposed to be doing."

February

NEVER FORGET: REFLECTIONS OF A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

Mike Vogel escaped from a death march in Auschwitz concentration camp in 1941, after having lost his grandparents, parents and four siblings to the gas chambers. For the past thirty years, Vogel has lectured throughout the U.S., "speaking for the six million who cannot speak," testifying since 1982 before the Office of Special Investigations of the U.S. Department of Justice in Nazi war criminal trials.

March

THE SCIENCE OF RISK

Chris Hirschfeld will conduct an interactive workshop on risk-taking in our everyday decision-making processes. As a former employee of Eli Lilly and Co., Chris was part of a special task force to study risk science in the form of specially constructed "games," and to apply the skills gleaned to corporate

decision-making. Come prepared to risk - secrets, viewpoints, and, for those extra-brave risk-takers, even cash!

Program Preview - Second Quarter peek

April - Judge Evan Goodman will share some of his experiences on the bench of our municipal courts.

May - Alexandra "Sandy" Monro, head of the Indianapolis Chapter of the Hemlock Society, discusses the current events relating to the Kevorkian-underlined euthanasia debate.

June - Marilene Isaacs (The Oracle), mystic healer, will startle and soothe you with her nonconventional approach to health and healing.

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The Ether Explains Magnetism

In 1744, George LeSage, a Swiss physicist, invented an energetic, multidirectional ether which he thought could lead to a theory of gravitation. LeSage died in 1803 without creating any large support for his theory of tiny particles of ether, moving at the speed of light. The discovery of the electron in 1898 led several scientists to theorize that the multidirectional ether might carry electric fields in all directions as it passes by the electrons. Einstein's disparagement of ether theories crippled these field theories.

This author, Herman Hagemier, began his study of physics in 1961 when he noted that the physicists had no theory of an ether. He also noted that the light waves had nothing to wave in. He had a B.S. in chemistry and botany but only a survey course in physics. He proceeded to invent light waves and other waves which consisted of multitudes of small particles. He had not heard of George LeSage at that time. He wondered why no one had ever thought of this ether.

He began to see the ether as winds of small particles, blowing through each other in all directions at the speed of light. The particles would be so small that the mean collision-free path of a particle could span light years of distance. The ether particles, despite their lack of effect on each other, can be changed to become the units of fields of force, just by passing through electron or proton fields. This indicates that ether particles can pass through phases. They may be magnetized or demagnetized, or they may be magnetized in a directional manner.

When the ether blows in every possible direction it is a logical certainty that it also blows in every possible pair of opposite directions. This was a concern thirty-seven years ago when I first read, D. S. Parasnis in his book, "Magnetism, From Lodestones to Polar Wandering," Harper, New York, 1961, PP. 25-28. He gave a great quantity of technical information that this author has yet to find anywhere else. One of the most interesting bits of information was that the forces within a long bar magnet can be measured by cutting narrow slots at various spots and inserting dipoles.

The measured strength just outside and inside the poles is one-half of what it is over the interior length of the magnet. Parasnis explains the doubling of the strength inside the magnet by saying that a demagnetizing field is created at each pole and this field extends to the center of the magnet. The magnet is a big mystery to the physicists because the iron filing's test shows them that the magnetic fields are leaving one pole of the magnet and are curving around the

sides to enter the other end. The orbital planes send helical waves in the pole directions of motion and sine curves in the lateral directions.

Because the magnet has two poles and because the LeSage ether could accommodate two lines of magnetic force moving in opposite directions, it is possible to visualize ether entering the north end of a magnet and a magnetic field coming out of the south end of the magnet. There could also be ether going into the south end of a magnet and a magnetic field coming out of the north end. It is easy to see why there is one field outside of each end of the magnet and two fields inside the magnet. As the ether enters the magnet it takes a very short moment for the spinning electrons to create the fields. It is possible to detect that transient moment when the field is forming by using that process of cutting small slots near the ends of the magnet and at other interior spots.

In 1845 Michael Faraday found that the plane of polarization of a beam of light was rotated when the beam traveled through a slab of glass in a direction parallel to a magnetic field. When the magnet was turned end to end the magnetic field began rotating in the opposite direction.

If the smallest magnet is one atom long, it will still have a north pole and a south pole. The north pole will travel north in a direction perpendicular to the plane of the electron's orbit. The south Pole will travel south in a direction perpendicular to the plane of the electron's orbit. If this magnet is turned end to end, the south end will become the north end and the north end will become the south end.

If a second one-atom magnet is added to the first magnet, the faces of the two magnets should be marked in a similar manner with a N on the two north ends and a S on the two south ends. If we place the atoms together so that the S on one atom touches the N on the other magnet, that would be a friendly arrangement. They would be pulled together.

If they are S with S or N with N, there will be left spins clashing with right spins, and that will result in their mutual destruction. The two ends which are not being pushed together are free to pull the two magnets apart. Like gravitation, magnetism is always a pull. It is never a repulsion. The so-called repulsion is a collision and two pulls. There is a good reason for the magnetic atoms to line themselves up so that north always contacts south. Of course there are thousands of different kinds of bonds. It is the magnetic atoms that line up in long rows to form fields so strong that magnetic poles emerge into the air.

Nancy White

A Snapshot of a Week in Mensa

The first week of December was a lovely time to be an active Mensan, though few had the pleasure of discovering this for themselves.

On Wednesday evening, December 2, Central Indiana Mensa volunteered to answer the telephones at Channel 20 during WFYI's membership drive. Featured that evening were Brian Wilson, formerly of the Beach Boys, and Pavorotti and Friends. The caliber of people who called in that evening was a delight. Domino's Pizza generously donated six pizzas that night so those who went on supper break ate well in addition to enjoying our breaks gabbing with one another and the WFYI personnel. John Blankenship, Greg Crawford, George Dunn, Marcelle Everest, Jim Harris, Jud Horning, Rhoda Israelov,

Frank Tharp and I had the satisfaction of helping a good cause in the good company of each other.

On Friday, December 4, Lunch Bunch had a small turnout at the Canary Cafe with Alix Hasenmeyer, Jeff Lake, Chris Newton, Petra Ritchie, Alan Schmitt and me. Among the topics of discussion were the publication of The Book of Lists by the Indianapolis Business Journal, which Petra had been () and Chris' recent marriage.

On Sunday, December 6, it was Christmastime, L.S. Ayers style, at the Indiana State Museum. Marion Martin took a business holiday from her job as librarian at (), to run the museum's bookstore; Jud Horning was Santa's Helper; Rhoda Israelov and Carol Gould were conductors on the Santa Train with Jeff Lake as the authentically costumed engineer; I was ticketmaster; and Greg Crawford was the "floater" -- the one who relieved us [when] our eyeballs started to float. Afterwards, we adjourned to Bazbeau's on Massachusetts Ave for gourmet pizza.

Want to join us next time? Though we certainly had a good time, the more the merrier.

Starting the New Year Right

On Friday, January 1, 1999, Lunch Bunch will meet at the Canary Cafe downtown on Fort Wayne Street just north of the Federal Building. If staying at home watching multiple channels of football does not appeal to you, join us for fun, great food at reasonable prices, and (best of all) intelligent Mensa conversation from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The last time January 1 was on a Friday, we had a great lunch. Let's surpass ourselves?

On Saturday, January 2, the Ham 'n Eggs will be different. Hostess par excellence [Alison Brown](#) will have the event at the home at _____. (See calendar for details).

Coming to either or both will certainly be a way to give the New Year a great start. See you, folks!

B _____
A _____
S _____
I _____
L _____
by Basil Wentworth

137 PHONY PHONETICS III (Cuisine)

Our chef is both sturdy and stout,
And accomplished! Of this there's no doubt.
He can go any route
From croissants up to kraut,
But the dish he makes best is ragout

He also makes good ratatouille,
Which tastes better by far than chop suey:
While the latter is chewy
(Sometimes even gooey)
The former is loved in Louisville.

And he fashions delightful souffles

In a style which he calls Louis Treize.
 They have earned him high praise,
 They evoke loud hurrahs,
 And they taste good when served with truffles.

He can also make cafe au lait;
 A Hawaiian would likely say lei,
 A singer, a lay;
 A minstrel, a lai;
 And a few more, if you've time to wait.

And consider his fish amandine,
 A dish truly fit for a queen;
 If a man is too lean,
 He should check out the scene:
 Amandine could make a man dine.

* * * * *

Though I shut up my mind (lock it, too)
 Odd spellings still try to burst through,
 And I don't have a clue
 I can offer to you,
 But I'm only surprised when they do.

MINDBENDING HONOR ROLL

[H = Host]	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Dave A.	♥	♥	♥			♥
Alison Brown			♥H	♥H		
Greg Crawford	♥H	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥H
George Dunn	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
Carol Gould				♥		
Jud Horning			♥	♥	♥	
Jerry Hunter	♥	♥	♥		♥	♥
Rhoda Israelov			♥	♥		
Treva Marks	♥	♥H	♥	♥	♥H	♥
Jean Miller	♥	♥	♥			
Joseph Spearing			♥			
Russ Washburne			♥			
Nancy White	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥

Next opportunity to get your name on this list: Alison Brown's place, Jan. 27.

BOOK FOR SALE -- "The Magnetic Double Helix" is a large series of common sense theories, the result of thirty-seven years of research in physical science. These theories are all based on the LeSage ether, invented in 1744 by George LeSage. There is no math beyond first semester algebra in this book's large number of beautiful revolutionary theories.

A 150 page book in a GBC slotted binding = \$15.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling. Send money order or check to Herman F. Hagemier, P.O. Box 382, Pendleton, Indiana, 46064.

Robert O. Adair : Logically Speaking

What is most important to understand about logic focuses on three areas. First of all, there is the definition which is essential to a disciplined and intelligent

discussion. Then there is the syllogism and various classic fallacies.

Definition often goes beyond the words immediately in view. Philosophy systems usually have a whole vocabulary that goes with them. Other disciplines such as economics, law, government, and science likewise have key terms and key concepts. Such expressions as "cruel and unusual punishment" have a history dating back at least to the 18th Century. It is not legitimate to place any old construction on these words that you happen to think is logical. It means a mode of execution that goes beyond the ordinary means such as hanging, beheading, and more lately, the gas chamber or electric chair. It does not relate to the question as to whether you think the death penalty is justified. It is in contradistinction to disembowelment, impalement, keelhauling and being bruned at the stake. One also thinks of such interesting procedures as tying a horse to each limb and whipping them up to pull the person apart, or staking them out on an anthill, or slowly lowering them into a pit of vipers. With a little imagination, one can think of a number of other ways to dispose of somebody. Contrary to popular opinion, these methods are not derived from pulp fiction, but from history.¹

A Communist agitator thought she was very clever in referring to "kind and usual punishment." I really wonder how many people realize that the standard methods of execution are in fact intended to be humane and in fact painless. All of these methods such as hanging which breaks a person's neck are designed to happen so fast that if it is properly done, the person will feel no pain. They will be dead before they can feel anything. The guillotine was invented by a French physician who intended this as a humanitarian improvement over the headsman's ax.² Once again the issue in view is not the appropriateness of punishment per se but in having it carried out evenly and humanely.

Science worshipers habitually refer to "scientific proof." But, in fact, there is no such thing. Scientifically, you can "demonstrate" principles and "verify" hypotheses. But a strict formal proof is a matter of deductive logic. Concepts derived from inductive reasoning cannot, in the nature of things, be proved. The[y] are always subject to revision through the discovery of further, contradictory evidence.

Parenthetical to this discussion is the fact that there are four atheistic, secularist philosophies of science, all of which assert in one way or another that while science is useful, it really isn't true.

Science worshipers are fond of statements like "I will believe in nothing unless it can be proved scientifically." This is to utter complete nonsense. Their other favorite caveat is "I will believe in nothing except material things." This is a typical self contradiction. Belief is not a material thing. Selfhood is not a material thing. Thought is not a material thing. No one can function as a normal human being while consistently applying these principles. One variation of the scientific [sic] proof fallacy is "I won't believe in the universe until they can produce one in the laboratory."

Significantly, besides logic which is not per se science, there is also legal proof according to the rules of evidence used in the courtrooms and of course, historical fact. One weakness of science is that it deals with repeatable phenomena which can also be tested and reproduced. Unfortunately, to function as a human being, we must deal with all sorts of things which are very real but do not have these characteristics. Neither your birth nor the Battle of Waterloo can be repeated umpteen thousands of times to see how it comes out each time. There is no scientific proof or even verification or demonstration that the science worshipers exist.³

Possibly the most popular logical fallacy today is not one of the classic formal fallacies. It simply amounts to a failure to understand what it means to establish a premise. This is very ironic because throughout history this has been so instinctively understood it is embodied in folk wisdom: "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" and "Two can play the same game."

When certain people set out to criticize a certain book as containing logical fallacies, it raises several questions. 1. Do these critics know anything about logic? 2. Are they themselves committed to thinking logically? If they are not themselves committed to thinking logically and are in fact irrationalists, their line of criticism raises the question of hypocrisy. It is also very bemusing for an irrationalist to say somebody else is wrong because they are irrational. Irrationalists should see irrationality as a positive virtue.

When a Communist criticizes someone else as bloodthirsty, he raises the question how can a person who represents the most murderous credo in all of human history criticize anybody else for being bloodthirsty?

What is a contradiction? Most people don't know, especially those critics I have cited.⁴ Most people when confronted with "all x is y" and "no x is y" and are asked if that is a contradiction say, yes, it is. But, of course, it is not. Those are contraries. There is only a contradiction if you are asserting that both propositions are true in the same way and at the same time.

One of the most common mistakes in finding contradictions is to turn up two phrases in a text that appear to contradict each other. On examination it is discovered that there are two possible meanings for one of the statements and taking the one that wasn't thought of resolves the question.

The critics I am thinking of⁴ need to be reminded that the superior knowledge gambit plays much better when you have some actual superior knowledge.

¹By tradition, the King of Northumbria used that snakepit method on one Ragnar Lodbrok, unsuccessful viking - Ed

²Another workman loses his job to automation

³Cogito, ergo sum?

⁴i.e., Communists and science worshipers

As a rule, negatively labeling critics (even in the abstract) does not invite reasoned argument; people are reluctant to come to the table when the place cards read "irrationalist" and "bloodthirsty."

To Keep In MIND

Upcoming Gatherings and Events

*** 1999 ***

January 29-31

Circle City RG "Party Like It's 1999" Best Western Waterfront Plaza Hotel, Indianapolis. (Hotel's phone: 800-528-1234, 317-299-8400. Mention you're with the Mensa RG Group when reserving a room. \$65 per night up to 4 per room.) Registration: \$50 through December 31st, \$60 thereafter. All meals included. (Fri supper, Fri late-night ice-cream, Sat bkfst/lunch/supper, Sat late-night ice-cream, Sunday bkfst.) 24 hour hospitality and game rooms. Wine and Cheese Tasting. Scholarship Book Sale. DJ Dance Night. Joke-Off. Improv Night. Quiz Bowl. Hell's M's. True Greed. Ice Cream Orgy. Subs, Pizza, Chicken, M & M's. Win, Lose or Doodle.

	Also Featuring: All Female Speakers, including the former head of the Indiana Democratic Party, investment and estate advisors; Gypsy Moon, the National Queen of the Hobos; disaster rescue specialists, and more. Poolside folk music sessions Friday and Saturday nights. Bring your banjo or guitar. Saturday morning exercise. A caricature artist to capture YOU. An ongoing writer's contest; to enter, bring any original work -- can be fiction, prose, poetry, or non-fiction, it must be typed and unsigned and will be posted for all to read and vote on. Registrar: Karen Wilczewski
February 26-28	Wild Kingdom RG , St. Louis, MO; Holiday Inn Southwest/Viking, 10709 Watson Road, St. Louis, MO 63127; (314)821-6600 or (800)682-6338; rooms \$59; Registration: Gary and Sara Gaden; ggaden@inlink.com ; Web site .
March 26-28	Tropical Paradise Cruise , Best Western Midway Hotel, 7711 West Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, MI 48917; rooms \$65; Registration \$45 to 2/28, \$50 after; checks to Mid-Michigan Mensa RG; contact: Elizabeth Evangelista.
April 30 - May 2	SEMMantics 21 Contact Betsy Y. Mark. BetsyYMark@aol.com
July 1-5	Orange County AG ; Hyatt-Regency Long Beach, (800)233-1234; rooms \$99 - \$119; Registration: \$49 to 12/31; \$59 to 5/31; Greg de Hoogh
October 1-3	CAMbake Contact Concetta E. Bartosh

***** 2000 *****

July 5-9	Delaware Valley Mensa AG (Philadelphia) (Joint AG with Mensa Canada)
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***** 2001 *****

July 4-8	North Texas Mensa AG (Dallas)
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Dom Jervis

Advice

Why do we give advice? Viable reasons include (in decreasing order of benevolence): 1) a genuine desire to help others; 2) a belief that a contribution to the world's "favor pool" will ultimately come back to benefit you; 3) an urge to demonstrate one's ability to solve a particular problem and 4) a craving to inflict one's value system upon another human being. The probabilities of the third and fourth factors increase when dispensing advice regarding a problem which one has had and brought under control, versus advice with a problem one has never had.

Should there be rules on requesting advice? I offer the following. Be careful *from whom* you seek counsel. Understand that the advice you receive may be the last words you want to hear ("Spend less than you earn!"). Lastly, recognize that even the best advice is based on the experiences of the giver, who cannot possibly understand fully the permutation of events which makes your life unique for all time.

Should there be rules on giving advice? One makes the rest appear trivial. Only give advice that is useful and feasible. Refrain from the impractical ("Quit that job you hate right now and go chase your dream!") or the worthless ("You can set up your system any way you want to, but you have to tell me what you want or I can't help you."). Avoid vague, theoretical, idealistic "non-solutions" devoid of pragmatic value. Only give advice that can realistically be implemented, and that will be of at least some benefit. If one adheres to this simple principle, the other rules aren't really that important.

Similarly *do not* lecture on what the requester should have done in the past which would have prevented the problem from occurring in the first place. That knowledge is of no use now, and this insulting "non-advice" could easily cost you a good friend. If you can't do this, then do the world a favor and politely decline to counsel any pregnant teenagers you might ever meet.

While I have *never* considered myself better than anyone else, I do believe that Mensans possess a *special gift*. I consider the effect that my advice will have not only on the requester's situation, but also on this person's image of Mensa. Your friends know you are very intelligent. **Act that way!**

What is the best advice I ever received? That's easy. The "best boss I will ever have" advised me to join an organization to which he belongs, Sertoma (Service to Mankind). He asked that I work at Sertoma's annual event at the Penrod Art Festival. Through fortunate coincidence, Sertoma's booth was near Mensa's. I stopped by, requested further information, and the rest is history. Thanks to Mensa, I have also joined Intertel and the International Society for Philosophical Enquiry. For years, I had considered pursuing membership in Mensa, and I wish I had joined twenty years ago. However, if not for the opportunity presented by Sertoma, I doubt that I would have *ever* become a Mensan.

For that wonderful piece of advice, I can only say, "Thank you, Chuck Corbin!"

[I just have to note that Dom has treated all advice except Chuck's as solicited advice -Ed]

Dom Jervis

If I Won the Lottery

After I ensured my financial security for life, friends would receive gifts of up to ten thousand dollars each. This is the maximum allowable per year without the donor having to pay gift tax.

Central Indiana Mensa (CIM) would receive such a gift annually, presuming I had sufficient funds. I'd ask that CIM set aside \$1,000 for the annual dues and/or registration fees for its RG for CIM members with limited financial resources. The remainder could be used as CIM deems fit. I trust your judgment. I have written before that I am with you in spirit always. I meant it then. I mean it now. My current chapter would receive no such gift, ever.

If there were any funds left, I would emulate Mr. Percy Ross, the Minneapolis millionaire who is attempting to give away all of his money before he makes the transition. I would like to observe his foundation's operation. Imagine this letter:

Dear Mr. Ross,

My name is Dom Jervis. I just won X million dollars in the lottery, and I desperately need your help!

Once I convinced him of my sincerity, I believe he would share his experience with me, and thus help me avoid the pitfalls of operating such a foundation.

Contrary to the tendency in corporate America toward empire-building, I would attempt to run my foundation alone. The down-sizing trend in this decade was the result of many employees being paid more than their work product was worth. Bureaucratic bloat would not exist in my foundation. The most effective committee has one member.

Running such a foundation would be an education. It would offer an insight into the gamut of human nature. A single mother trying her best to get off of welfare might need her care repaired, clothes for work, or two weeks of day care before she sees her first paycheck. A would-be con man might ask for a Porsche, just because he feels he deserves it. From these extremes to the plethora of situations in between, such an endeavor would offer a panoramic glimpse into our society that few people could even see. Each day would be a new adventure. For the first time in my life, I would feel like I couldn't wait to get to work in the morning. Were it that everyone could feel that way!

What would I get from this? Plenty! First, I would have the intrinsic satisfaction of having helped friends, old and new. Second, I would demonstrate that a one-man foundation can function more efficiently and more effectively than large organizations, who have deviated from their original missions, and who now concentrate on fund-raising and other acts of self-perpetuation. I would expose them for the frauds that they are. I might even become a classic case-study in an MBA curriculum! Third, perhaps I will have enlightened those whom I intentionally chose not to help. I may force them to reexamine their characters. Had they been better people, I might have granted their requests. In the end, they would see that they have no one to blame but themselves.

Dom Jervis

A Season of Peace

Is the absence of armed conflict the same as "peace"? Of course it isn't. True peace requires the absence of any desire for conflict. Anything less recalls the cynical aphorism, "Diplomacy is the art of saying, 'Nice doggy!' until one can find a rock."

The holidays evoke memories of childhood. Hopefully, these were among our most happy stress-free, peaceful days. Also, as another year draws to a close, we cannot help but reflect on the past year, our accomplishments, mistakes and hopes for the future. Such thoughts often occur on one's birthday as well. Unlike birthdays, the whole world can experience this annual reflection together, helping each of us to feel connected to this common mindset. What could be more altruistic than hope that the peoples of the world could live together without strife?

Alas, the holiday spirit passes. We return to our mundane day-to-day lives, the most significant difference being the new year we write on our checks. We are

saddled with the same responsibilities, possessed by the same demons and haunted by the ever-evolving picture of what might have been.

Depressing? It can be, but only if you let it. Too many of us long for what we don't and never can have. Try appreciating what you *do* have. For example, if this newsletter was mailed to you then you were blessed with a mind that only one out of every fifty people possesses. Chances are, you are reading this article from your home in Indiana. If so, the writer of this article envies that aspect of your life. I dream of returning to Indiana. Do you have a job, even one you despise? I know someone with a worse job than yours. You probably do, too. Do you have close, genuine friends? One or two of these is all you really need, plus acquaintances, associates and fellow Mensans. There is nothing wrong with keeping your world small. I do.

Are you able to keep a roof over your head? Do you have clothes you will never wear again? Does your car run well 95% of the time? If you lost your job tomorrow, could you survive for a month or two, or even longer, until you found another one? If you can affirmatively answer these questions, you are worthy of being envied, and have no reason to be envious of others. Realize that more than 50% of the world's population would significantly upgrade its living standard if it survived off of Americans' refuse, and it becomes difficult to bemoan the fact that one cannot afford to buy both a boat and a motorcycle. With all that, why would you want to take anything forcibly from someone else? Do you need it? Would it really make you happy?

What does this have to do with peace? People could be content with what they already have and still improve their lives. They can keep their aspirations at a reasonable level and learn to appreciate each successful step in their pursuit as an accomplishment. No one gets everything s/he wants, and not everything is worth the price of attaining it. You cannot change the world, but you can change *your* world.

I believe it is within the capability of everyone to "strive to be happy." It takes nothing more than genuine desire and effort. Best of all, it will bring peace to your world.

Happy holidays, my friends!

Primer for the February Topic:

"Crimes Against Humanity"

Next month's theme is a grim one; I hope writers will not be scared off, as there are multiple questions still needing answers at the end of this Century.

I think we need some definitions. (As always, writers are welcome to supply different definitions in constructing their arguments, as long as they express them.)

Crime. Behavior which 1) violates the spirit of the categorical imperative (would make the world worse if more people did it) and 2) is sufficiently severe to distinguish itself from lesser offenses such as discourtesy or carelessness.

Humanity. The collection of all real persons, as represented by a fraction too large to be regarded as a coincidental population.

Genocide. The actual killing of a group of people possessing a common

identity distinct from other groups such that the group is no longer represented in the larger population. Deliberation extinction of an ethnicity by means of murder.

Holocaust. The usual Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *Shoah*; utter destruction. Specifically, the attempt by the Nazis to exterminate the Jews.

These definitions are offered because these words, as well as others noticed for their power, tend to be appropriated for increasingly trivial applications. Efforts to require the teaching of English have been called "genocide" by those who felt their Hispanic roots in peril.

Some of the questions we might explore include:

* How language shields our consciences against examining what might be crimes.

* What role the conviction of being Right plays in our willingness to do things which, if done to us, would be obviously inhumane.

* Whether or not strong sentiments are required to carry out drastic actions, or if it is possible to perform with very little conviction.

* Is hypocrisy a necessary component of demonic acts, or can some people kill others in complete sincerity.

* Whether the last hundred years have shown progress or decline in the goals of civilization.

* What role forgiveness should play in healing the damages of horrendous deeds.

* How citizens should respond to perceived crimes against humanity.

* Could it happen here?

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