

Excerpts from the July 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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This is Volume 34, Issue Number 7, July 1999

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MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

Although I, not being a daytime soaps watcher, am not completely sure who Susan Lucci is, I'm nevertheless thrilled for her to win an Emmy after eighteen unsuccessful nominations. The older I get, the more virtue I see in seniority.

Also, I consider the possibility that this is an omen of the times and possibly the long-overlooked are due for time in the limelight. I refer to the Publications Recognition Program nomination of Basil Wentworth for the "Poetry" award at the 1999 Annual Gathering. Since I have used these pages to wonder why they haven't retired said award to him, you can see that I think this nomination quite ripe.

We got some other nominations as well: for "Entertainment - Theme Issues," "Entertainment - Poetry" (distinct from Basil's individual nomination), "Service - Forum" and (ahem) "Individual Achievement - Editorial" for this very column, "My Piece of MIND." (Although when I noticed that my certificate read, "A Piece of my Mind," I recalled why people get upset with Editors.) Oh well, as Abe Lincoln expressed it so eloquently, "Three quarter-centuries and a dozen years ago..."

As long as we've turned our attention to those boobs who thrust their grubby hands into the heartstrings of sensitive artistes, another round has been fired in the low-intensity battle over Ye Ed's license to tinker with contributors' immortal prose. This exchange has been alternating in a very genteel fashion, the last four months' letters being: con-pro-con-pro.

Making another segue, I got a compliment on last month's Ed piece: the reader liked the part about dueling being a lost check on vitriolic letters. We live in an odd time, one in which it is a protected right to desecrate a flag or a religious symbol, but in which calling an oafish person a "buffalo" can get one

rung up for "hate speech."

This may or may not bear on the underwhelming response to this month's theme, "Feuding Mensans." [Are my transitions smoking, or what?] We seem unevenly divided between those writers who hesitate to even address distasteful matters and those who consider, "Ah, blow it out your ___" as an invitation to dialogue.

If I had to choose, I'd wish for more of the latter, because the most distressing aspect of bickering in our society is the tendency to step around members in pain, as though they were drunks on a Victorian boulevard. "Getting involved" is not necessarily the same thing as "taking sides."

With Russ Washburne, I'm one of CIM's two Inter-Group Arbitrators and I've seen squabbling involving officers, editors and RVCs that had no more than a dollop of issues in a bucket of malice. We -Mensa- would go far towards elevating our organization if we demonstrated that we could balance justice and community.

In a completely unrelated matter: it's not too early (in fact, it's getting kinda late) to think about the 2000 RG. We did well this year, and, barring Y2Kaos, we should be a strong draw on the RG circuit as we open the (not!) New Millennium. Yes, we've pulled off some heroics in the past, but we cannot depend on Justin Case and Nick O'Tyme forever. Volunteer now!

LOCSECTION

Grace Falvey

A couple of Good Guys are in the spotlight this month. (Well, one's a Good Gal, but you get the idea.)

First, there's Warren Ward, who lives in Columbus, Indiana. He sent me a letter in response to my plea for volunteers. He wrote that although he is "geographically challenged," he would like to contribute some service to Central Indiana Mensa.

What perfect timing, just when we were looking for someone to organize the John Matthews Memorial Corn Party! Columbus isn't THAT far from Indianapolis, and it's very convenient for members in the Bloomington/Columbus area, so I asked Warren whether he could host the event, and he agreed.

We have settled on Sunday, August 15, at 2 p.m. Warren said he will provide hamburgers, hot dogs and of course, corn on the cob. Because there's no way to be sure of how many people will attend the party, those who do will be asked to contribute a side dish, such as salad, munchies, fruit or dessert.

Complete details and a map will be published in the August MIND, so mark your calendar now and get ready for a great summer party.

The Good Gal award goes to Rhoda Israelov, who invited our members to her home for a Memorial Day cookout. Unfortunately, she was unable to finalize her plans in time to have the event listed in the MIND Calendar, so we did the best we could to extend invitations by word of mouth and email.

Those who missed Rhoda's dinner missed a real feast. I believe she's a caterer at heart. Amateur cooks don't lavish that much attention on preparation

and presentation.

To keep her guests alert after dinner, Rhoda organized a game of Pictionary(R), which exposed a startling lack of artistic talent among those playing the game. Perhaps they're too left-brained. (Yes, I know, former Mensan Scott Adams is making a nice living from his creation Dilbert, but you must admit those are pretty primitive figures he draws.)

Anyway, here's an interesting coincidence, both Rhoda and Warren are professional investment counselors. Isn't that convenient? If you've given up your dream of winning the lottery, perhaps you could devise some other wealth-building strategies with the help of one of these Mensans. Meanwhile, promise yourself not to miss any more of these great parties!

LETTERS

To the Editor:

Dom Jervis

Feuding Mensans

As ostensibly intelligent people, we should be able to tolerate a wider range of perspectives than most others would. However, I have witnessed, on too many occasions, the "shouting down" of a fellow Mensan with a different opinion. Somehow, the shouter must think that this will make him more correct, or will intimidate the victim into changing his mind, or apologizing for his/her viewpoint.

As I have noted in previous articles, I have been called many defamatory names for stating my conservative libertarian views within my [former] local chapter. However, I refuse to stoop to the level of my detractors. I debate, but nonetheless respect, the opinions of others. As reprehensible as I find the new liberalism, I never, under any circumstances, resort to yelling or interrupting during a discussion. It would be an understatement to say that I have not been given the same courtesy. In fact, incorrect and malicious opinions given about me, by people who hardly know me, cost me an appointment to an office for which I had volunteered. As a result, I have become much less active in my local chapter than I would have been otherwise.

If disregard for others' views which I have witnessed does not soon cease and desist, I fear this could drive away current and prospective members to the point of threatening the existence of our organization. It will, at least, reduce the number of active members. This we do not need.

As Central Indiana Mensa's former LocSec (and a good friend of mine) so eloquently stated, we do not have a common political, religious, or life-saving theme to hold us together. Our group exists to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, enhance the lives of its members, provide benefits to our community, and hopefully have some fun. I fail to see how bellowing at a fellow member's opinion accomplishes any of these goals.

Some attempt to justify their behavior by saying that Mensa is the only place where they can be themselves. Thus, if they are not allowed to do so, they feel they have no reason to belong to Mensa. This self-serving attitude is not without potential peril. High intelligence is not an acceptable excuse for either poor manners or a disregard for common courtesy. Unfortunately, I have

witnessed too many fellow Mensans who do not share this belief.

You can do whatever you want to do, as long as you do not intentionally hurt another person, and you are willing to accept the consequences of your actions. Please keep this in mind the next time you speak with someone with a view different from yours. Try to engage in a calm, scholarly discourse. No one ever wins a shouting match, and potentially long-term hard feelings are a virtual certainty. That is not why we came together.

We can be our own wonderful, unique selves. However, we can't and won't peacefully co-exist unless we respect the rights of others to express their opinions, as different from ours as they might be.

[Unfortunately, Dom is wrong on one point: one side does win a shouting match, and that side is strengthened in its belief that violence is a better argument than reason. -Ed]

LATER, THE TUSCARORA

George Dunn

Feuding Mensans

No society gets very far along without experiencing conflict, but feuding is something special. We use the word to describe the kind of conflict that has for its goal the ruination of the opposition rather than the achievement of some practical benefit.

Some feuding, such as the notorious strife of some mountaineer clans, or the horrible manifestation of "ethnic cleansing," comes to bloodshed, but fortunately the category of "Mensa feuding" only involves social destruction.

Nevertheless, this civilized version calls on the same mental processes as its more brutal namesake. Specifically, Mensa feuds demand that at least one party (feuds do not have to be mutual) believes that another party must be crushed and that "issues" are merely means to that end.

It would seem that feuding is clearly bad for an organization and that "cooler heads" would move to abort it, especially in a supposed society of extra-bright people, but two factors tend to protect feud dynamics from intervention.

The first is that the aggressor (and most feuds do have aggressors) tries to conceal feud maneuvers as legitimate debate, discipline, investigation or "getting the truth out." The other is that few targets of feuds endure them for very long before striking back.

This leads to all but the most penetrating observers adopting one of two positions, both of which legitimize their "staying out of it": either the activity is authorized, or else both parties are equally at fault.

Now, we think of feuds as two-player games, and sometimes they are - there can be enough hard feelings that both parties want a fight to the death (preferably a figurative one) - but there is usually one mover and one respondent rather than a mutual decision to fight. This is so because only fools invite desperate conflicts when there seems a good chance they could lose. Consequently, most feuds start when a more powerful person decides to "get" a less powerful one.

So the big question remains: why does this happen in Mensa? And the easy answer: we aren't trained to apply our alleged brainpower to these situations. Well, then, could we, were we so inclined, do a better job aborting feuds than the "normal" folks?

If I say "no," there would have been no point on writing on this topic, so I'll claim we can, even though I don't have much real evidence to back up that position.

We are capable of critical perspective; we can ask the impertinent questions. Possibly all we need to master is the willingness to challenge interpersonal conflicts on their dynamics and to do this with just enough tact to avoid inflaming the feuding parties further.

Remember, what makes a feud a feud, even when it's under color of an official activity, is that the stated issues are not the real ones. Consequently, they can get kinda flimsy, and we can spot this if we look. When you see one of these long lists of charges designed to get an officer sacked, or member barred, ask yourself if these charges, even if completely true, justify the action proposed. Then imagine how they could possibly be overstated.

MINDBENDING HONOR ROLL

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

Fiction by Robert O. Adair

Mr. Mazurkian

Mr. Mazurkain lived on an old dirt road 20 miles out of Chicago. He had settled there some ten years before, just after the close of the Great War.

The only building on the place was a small tobacco barn which served as a showroom dwelling and workshop. He was a small man, plump, slightly oriental-looking, with white hair and a white beard.

Despite his out-of-the-way location, he was known all over the country by professional magicians. Mr. Mazurkian made cabinets – the kind that magicians' beautiful assistants disappeared in and the kind they were sawed in half in. He also had some smaller chests and boxes used for various things. There were those among his customers who felt his work not only functioned well but actually possessed strange, occult powers. I couldn't say myself, of

course. In addition to this, he was quite an expert on various aspects of magic. This was so much so that all the greatest magicians in the business, even some from Europe, sought him out to get his advice.

Despite his location, people knew of him and could reach his place in 45 minutes to an hour from Chicago, that great crossroads of America. They could buy much less expensive equipment elsewhere but the possession of one of Mr. Mazurkian's fine, large, cabinets was a hallmark of success. The inlaid wood, the splendidly carved figures, which seemed not static but dynamic, almost with a life of their own, so fascinated his would-be customers, that they swore to themselves they would find a way to pay his price. And that calls to mind a peculiarity of Mr. Mazurkian. He preferred to be paid in cash. Once in a while, for an old customer he would accept a check, but in most instances, it was cash. He kept a small bank account in the nearby town but this held only a few hundred dollars. Some people supposed he hoarded a huge sum in cash somewhere.

Late one Saturday night in April, four shabby young men entered Mr. Mazurkian's workshop. They looked like refugees from an old Dead End Kids movie. He was working late on still another fine cabinet. There was a bright electric light overhead, a study lamp, and several little votive candles burning in different corners.

"All right, old man! We know you've got a huge stash of money in here!" rasped one of them as they crowded around him. The speaker displayed a rather wicked looking knife.

Mr. Mazurkian seemed only mildly troubled. He answered, "Perhaps you know more than I do, young man."

"Don't crack wise with me, old man!" he snarled while pushing Mr. Mazurkian roughly against the wall.

Even with this provocation, Mr. Mazurkian remained quite calm.

"Let me put it this way, old man – your money or your life!"

"Umm, how melodramatic, young fellow." Mr. Mazurkian paid little heed to the knife now pressed against his chest.

"You _____! I'm going to carve you up!"

"I see. Well, young fellow, on reflection, you had better take my life. You see, I'm saving my money for my old age."

Before his assailant could respond, the lights went out. Strangely, not just the electric lights but the votive candles, everything. It was darker than the inside of a cave. Four men screamed, once, then a second time, ending in a gurgle. The second scream was peculiar in that it seemed as though they drew their breath in sharply as though they saw something that started them. Of course that's crazy; how could they have seen anything, well, unless it glowed with a light of its own?

That was the last anyone heard of these four fellows. Some local young man found their car about 1:00 a.m. He was returning from a dance. The key was in the ignition, and the gas tank was empty. Apparently it had been left idling some time before, probably 2 or 3 hours, and it simply had run until it ran out. The fact that it was parked a couple of hundred feet from Mr. Mazurkian's property didn't really suggest anything to the sheriff of the little town nearby.

He made only a cursory investigation.

All four men were considered ne'er-do-wells, more noted than anything for getting drunk in the local tavern. A time or two, they had been thrown in jail for disorderly conduct. There was quite a lot of idle talk, but nobody was greatly concerned. After a short while, they found other topics like the state fair and the new roof for the Baptist church.

A month later, Mr. Mazurkian proudly displayed a new cabinet to one of his magician friends who drove down from Chicago in his roadmaster automobile. It had a long hood and spare tires on each fender and two more on the rear.

"See how big it is! Notice the intricate carving! This is my finest work!" Indeed it was. His friend didn't even complain that Mr. Mazurkian wanted twice as much as usual. He promptly paid cash and made arrangements to have it delivered to him.

If someone had carefully examined the carving which adorned the case, something no local person would ever bother to do, they would notice four fully 3-dimensional heads, intricately, perfectly formed which exactly resembled those four missing hoodlums.

To Keep In MIND

Upcoming Gatherings and Events

*** 1999 ***	
July 23-25	Columbus Area Mensa Coup d'etat RG ; Days Inn North, 1212 E. Dublin-Granville Road (Rte 161), Columbus, OH 43229 (614) 885-9696, ext 0; rooms \$35 (Mensa rate); Registration: \$40 thru March 31, \$45 thru may 31, \$50 after; Registrar: Marshall Ankrom, Columbus, OH. Mankrom@netwalk.com
September 3-6	Rivers III ; RG Chair: Bob Heasley, Sewickley, PA; bheasley@usaor.net Registration \$40 (checks to Western Pennsylvania Mensa)
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 \$50 to 6/30, \$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.

*** 2000 ***

January 28-30	Circle City RG: Y2K Survivors' Party. Waterfront Plaza Hotel, 2930 Waterfront Parkway West, Indianapolis, IN 46214; (317) 299-8400
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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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B _____
A _____
S _____
I _____
L _____

by Basil Wentworth

147 UN-WORDS

In Italian, you may recall,
The suffix "-cello" means small,
Which poses a riddle,
Since cello's the fiddle
That's next to the biggest of all.

"Flammable"? Strange word indeed!
It's a word that we ought not to need--
It's a word that we use
Because some people choose
To believe what they think that they read.

Extra wary means more than just wary;
Extra scary's uncommonly scary.
So let me know, pray,
Just how you would say
More common than just ordinary.

To ravel, as we have been told,
Is what happens when fabrics grow old--
It means they wear out,
Which raises some doubt:
What meaning does "unravel" hold?

"Cry havoc!" went the roar,
"And loose the dogs of war!"
Dramatic--but
I wonder what
The word "unloose" is for.

* * * * *

If word meanings seem to be skew
And rather perplexing to you,
It's not Latin or Greek:
It is English we speak,
So don't be surprised they do.

BULLETIN BOARD

Russ Washburne:

Proctored Mensa
Admissions Test

Saturday, July 10, 2:00 p.m.

(317) 839-9282
for details

(You want your friends to be
members, too, don't you?)

Nancy White:

the Monthly Book Sale, briefly
run by Greg Crawford, is back
under my administration.
Please bring any books in
good condition you'd like to
give to a good home.

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

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)

pritchier@ibj.com

The ExCom: Dom Jervis has
been selected to fill the vacant
seat on the ExCom.

OG Committee: This year's
Outdoor Gathering will be
canceled effective July 9 due
to lack of volunteers.

Herman Hagemier

Another *MIND* Classic:

FROM FEBRUARY 1984

ON THE TABLE

by Teresa MarQuand

HOW MENSA CAN AFFECT ONE'S PERSONAL (AND SOCIAL) LIFE

Of all the benefits that I've gotten from my 2 ½ years in Mensa, the greatest one has been the opportunity to develop a social life. Before I joined Mensa, I had virtually no friends, and absolutely no chances to socialize with other people. I was starved for human contact. Now, I not only get to attend meetings and parties with Indy friends, but I also have friends and penpals all over the country.

However... If there is one area where Mensa has been disappointing, it would

have to be its affect on my romantic life. Or should I say, its lack of affect on my romantic life.

When I first joined Mensa, I sensed quite a bit on one-on-one (if you'll excuse that expression) socializing going on among many of the single members. At my first A.G., I was surprised at the number of couples walking around more closely attached than Chang and Eng. The people in these duos not only had different last names, but usually weren't even from the same state. "Oh, boy!" I thought. "I can see I'm going to like this organization!"

At each monthly meeting I saw many attractive men, and managed to get acquainted with most of them. I just knew it was only a matter of time until one of them found me so charming that he would want to get to know me better. It turns out that I was overconfident.

I started to think that perhaps I was being too subtle, and tried to let various men know that I was interested in them. I've had them say, "I don't date women who are in Mensa," and "I'm just not into that sort of thing at this time in my life." Some gave me the we-must-get-together-sometime routine. Some just ignored me. (Of the last two reactions, I prefer being ignored.) I retreated back into subtlety.

More than one person has told me that in Mensa, sex takes place **before** getting acquainted. What a pity, if this is true.

I would love to see the Mensa Education and Research Foundation do research on Social/Sexual Activity Among the Intellectual Elite. I seem to be out of step with everyone else in this area, and MERF might be able to set me straight.

Primer for the September Topic:

They Should Pass A Law

Politicians are wont to boast that ours is a "government of laws, not of men," by which they presumably mean that our lives are free from the whimsies of powerful nobles, by whom they would be victimized in some *other* counties. Generally glossed over is the fact that said laws are the creations of men (and occasionally women) and that the advantage they offer the people lies mostly with their established dates of passage, so we can avoid that *ex post facto* problem you run into with overt tyrannies.

Spectacular and deplorable (but in terms of actual body counts, fairly modest) school shootings produced a flurry of proposals to somehow still the savage spirit and make gentle the life of the nation by requiring gun locks, making character checks at trade shows, holding parents responsible for their children's marksmanship, increasing certain forms of mass entertainment and generally magnifying the list of offenses one can commit.

Any gun law actually implemented will join an already extensive field or reactive legislation mandating employment of the disabled, housing of the disadvantaged, taxation of the disenfranchised and education of the disaffected.

We must acknowledge that sometimes laws are repealed. Bans on Sunday liquor sales are about the only survivors of the infamous "blue laws"; interracial marriage is no longer illegal, and a whole category of "sumptuary laws,"

essentially state-wide dress codes, has all but vanished.

Still, the roster of ruling guidance grows ever longer, even though we have long passed any hope of universal, or even consistent, enforcement. In fact, today it seems that passing a law counts as actually doing something effective, whether or not this law is ever obeyed.

Master Kung, aka Confucius, said that governments of good men were preferable to governments of good laws, since bad men always find ways to corrupt laws. Some Western social philosophy also emphasizes building character over increasing the roll of infractions.

Still, if we now regard "laws" as perfect instruments for the blessing of society, what laws might we suggest to further this great goal? Perhaps mandatory volume locks on any radio/tape player sold to a teenager? How warning labels on satanic rock products ["Prolonged listening may cause you to become a psychopath"] or making it a crime to wear camouflage clothing within 500 feet of a school?

Or how about demanding that SUVs can only be operated between home and deer camp and must be transporting at least one 3-man tent, 24 cans of beer and 100 lbs of dogs?

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