

# Excerpts from the March 1999 MIND

The Newsletter of

## [Central Indiana Mensa](#)

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### **PUBLISHING STATEMENT**

Central Indiana Mensa, a Local Group of American Mensa Ltd., publishes MIND monthly. Mensa, a not-for-profit organization open to all persons scoring in the 98th percentile on a standardized intelligence test, neither endorses nor opposes the opinions reported in MIND, which remain those of the individual contributors.

### **CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES**

MIND accepts contributions from all interested parties, with preference for publication going to members of Central Indiana Mensa. **Contributions should reach the Editor's postal box 50946, Indianapolis, IN 46250 at least twenty days before the 1st day of the publication month. Materials must take the form of legible written copy and/or camera-ready art. Please do not submit items on magnetic media.** Contributions may undergo editing for length and to eliminate patently offensive remarks, including personal attacks. The Editor must know the name of any contributor before publication; however, he will withhold that name from the public on request.

### **REPRINT INFORMATION**

Other Mensa publications may freely reprint material in MIND. Please send a copy of the issue with the reprinted material to the MIND Editor. If a piece bears an individual copyright, obtain permission from the author before reprinting.

### **MIND STAFF**

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

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

**Proofreader:** Rhoda Israelov

**Publisher:** Nancy White

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**This is Volume 34, Issue Number 3, March 1999**

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#### **MIND Archives**

No animals were harmed in the production of this newsletter. Do not attempt this at home. Your result may vary. No user-serviceable parts inside. Charges are computed on the unpaid balance. Wait until the vehicle has come to a complete stop. Make sure your seatbacks and tray tables are in the full upright and locked position. Not suitable for small children. Dispose of properly. This product should not be used in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. Nontoxic if used as directed. The recommended daily allowance of this product has not been established. Not a significant source of vitamins, calcium or iron. Contains no fruit jice. Use no hooks. For best results, use within one month of purchase. Store in a cool, dry place. Not valid with any other offer. Merchandise must remain in its original packaging. Offer applies to in stock products only. No rain checks. Photocopies not accepted. No price adjustments from previous sales. Merchandise may not be disassembled to meet space requirements. Product packed by weight, not volume; some settling is normal.

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## MY PIECE OF MIND

GEORGE DUNN

I suspect that not too many people actually read these little ed pieces, possibly because I've devoted too much of 'em to carping about laggardly contributors. I wonder if some people cringe from them. I hope not, because I mean them half in humor - most of the time, anyway. If you got some of the calls I do asking questions that are answered on the inside front cover every month (e.g., Q: "Can I send you a disk?" A (published): Do not submit items on magnetic media.") you too might feel you were doing a comedy routine along the lines of Sam Jaffe's "Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions."

But even that's too harsh, because nobody (well, hardly anybody) reads the administrivia. I think the question is daft because I've already answered it eighty-four times, forgetting that this particular questioner has only asked it once (maybe twice).

On the other hand, the readers have been really, really kind to me. I'm closing in on my fourth year as Editor, and by this time in the history of the job there are usually five or six members demanding the Editor's head on a plate. Almost all anybody ever says to me is, "I really liked that thing you ran."

Of course I consider that this reflects the superb job I'm doing, but other Editors, some of them probably better than me, have done superb jobs and not been spared hostility. After all, I've yet to get a Publications Award for

MIND, as some of my predecessors have.

With all this fair weather, it was sort of a perverse pleasure for me to get my first crank letter the other day. Well, perhaps "crank" is too pejorative a characterization; this is a well-structured, properly punctuated, reasonably calm missive, which just happens to be on the theme "I'll Never Write To Your Rag Again!"

I'm still deciding whether I'll publish that letter this month or give the writer a little cooling-off time, inasmuch as the interval between the posting of the letter and the offense which gave rise to it was very brief.

The offense was of the legitimate sort: I changed the writer's article. Well, it wasn't actually an article, but I can't explain any more without giving away the writer's identity, which wouldn't be fair if I don't run it.

Writers are a sensitive bunch. I know; I'm one of 'em. Our sentences are like our children and the words are their toes and fingers. The redactor who does more than fix typos might as well mutilate our kids.

This is one (more) of those times I wish more people venerated that suggested 500-word limit. Now I know that there are those who crank out 2200 in a burst and on review decide that every blessed one of them is golden, but those are the ones who just naturally go to the front of the line to be either a) edited, or b) deferred for publication. Ironically, both authors of the only column the By-Laws forbid me to edit, the LocSection, have always told me to tinker away.

I guess it wouldn't hurt to reiterate that ol' editorial policy: I don't screen for literary merit or political persuasion or in response to criticism; only for length and civility, and I'll even flex a little on those, but there is an elastic limit.

Readers can help by being open with me. I hope to cause you happiness from seeing your work in print, but I can't grant every wish, especially the ones that I don't know about.

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<b>Unity    Commitment    Purpose</b>
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## **LOCSECTION**

### **GREG CRAWFORD**

By now, I am no longer LocSec. However, by virtue of retaining that title on MIND deadline day, I have one more column to write. All things considered, I'll try to make lemonade out of those lemons and share some thoughts on how not to treat whomever inherits the job.

First, please do not badger your LocSec. No matter what is on your mind and no matter how important it is to you, remember that you are only one of over 400 local members and - should you be either an officer or a program chair - you are only one of over two dozen such.

Once the new LocSec and/or ExCom has said yes, no or otherwise, please pitch in and work to implement his or her decision. Remember, he or she will have to look at The Big Picture and must balance the needs of many individuals and programs; not just yours.

Second, please participate in those programs. The LocSec should never have to make good for everyone else's lack of follow-through. If you commit, make it

happen. More important, commit in the first place. Mensa cannot survive with only a handful of volunteers and a whole lot of people along for the ride.

Had only those two principles been followed I would still be LocSec. Other Mensa volunteers have shared similar sentiments, publicly and privately. Unfortunately, those of us who have done the work have invariably received more grief than cooperation. This is why we have lost so many programs and ultimately, why we have declined by over 200 members within the 1990's.

As I end this last column, I end my short time as LocSec. I also end my time of receiving late night phone calls, at-work phone calls, wake-up phone calls complaint letters and various other bits of grief. I even end my time of having to threaten one member with a restraint order just to be left alone. I sincerely hope the incoming LocSec does better than I. More important, I hope the next LocSec gets treated as a valued volunteer rather than a scapegoat or patsy. We owe that much.

## **LET'S DO IT!**

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### LETTERS

Dear Editor:

I had a myriad of emotions when I opened the December 1997 MIND and found the owl drawing my dad did: intense grief at having just lost him, pride and joy in remembering his help and contributions such as that while I was Editor, and a fervent desire to see his work credited. Ironically, the owl appeared on the page of contributors' names. If you could mention Don Sandstrom was the artist of that owl (reprinted from July of I believe 1988 or 1989), I'd feel much better.

Sorry for the delay; mourning has blurred all of 1998. I still have to thank all my Mensan friends for attending my dad's memorial service November 1997. It, as you all do, meant a great deal to Eric and me.

Bibi Sandstrom

*[Glad to do it, Bibi; and for those who don't keep all their back issues of MIND (hard to believe, I know), here's the Donald Sandstrom Owl again. -Ed]*

[drawing of owl]

*[Appropos of something: What little original art gets contributed to MIND usually goes into a topical file called a morgue to await a presentable opportunity (I've still got a bat by Julie pending a Halloween story). If the creator wants credit - and who doesn't - he or she should tuck his/her name or initials into a corner of the work for reproduction with the drawing. -Ed]*

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To the Editor:

It's really too bad the ExCom and Mensa has to lose Greg as a leader, however, I can understand where he's coming from, having had similar experiences, only on a smaller scale, and certainly without the harassment. I love Mensa. This group has become a big, happy family to me, complete with dysfunctional members!! Some of my best friends I have met through this

group.

I had been on the ExCom for years and have held several different positions. I know how hard different jobs can be. (George, you are NOT a "do nothing" ExCom member. Being Editor is one of the most difficult jobs we have! Not to mention doing RG Hospitality.) A lot of the picnics, etc. I have done solo, except for Greg being happy to pitch in and help when my schedule would interfere. A lot of others have pitched in, too, in various ways.

Since being dropped from the ExCom this last election, (not being reelected) that opened up vacancies for the jobs I had been responsible for. This is one part of what Greg was trying to get volunteers to take over (no one would).

As far as events are concerned, I have a fear of VVA (Vicious Verbal Attack) if I choose to go to certain events, i.e., MINDBending or the Thanksgiving Dinner. I do not desire to subject myself to this, so I don't go. I was warned about the VVA problem when I first came around, but how many other people have come around - for the first and last time and thought that was the way we all behaved. I'm sure we've lost some there.

The reason I hung in there so long was that this stuff is fun. Planning a party or picnic with someone else's money is great!! So is taking pictures of the Museum during Christmas time, etc. The more people that get involved, the less there is to do, and the more fun it is.

I think each of us needs to look at what the group means to them, and what each of us is willing to do. If there really isn't enough interest to keep the group going, then let it die. We are a social organization, and it won't matter much to the overall scheme of things if that does ultimately happen.

It really doesn't take a lot of effort to do a certain task. There are large and small jobs, plenty to go around. Whether it's being OG Chair or bringing pop to a Monthly Meeting, all of it matters. It just takes someone to take on the responsibility to see that it gets done. For a picnic, all that is involved is renting a shelter and buying the picnic food and bringing it to the shelter. (You get reimbursed.)

There's even the fun stuff - going to the events. Help support the SIGs, go to them. Come to the Monthly Meetings and the picnics and parties. Once you see how much fun it is, you will be glad to pitch in!!!

Sooner or later, we will be fighting over who gets to be MM Hospitality, or have a competition to see who gets to chair the RG. Like the "good ol daz." not to be confused with Dazed and Confused.....

Sandy Sheehan

*[re those VVA/interpersonal conflicts: we have a Mediator, Russ Washburne; check in with him before you avoid an event. -Ed]*

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Dear Editor:

I have been a member of Mensa for approximately 10 years. During that period of time, I have observed the local chapter struggle, with limited success, for an identity than can accommodate the interests of its diverse membership. For that reason, Greg's resignation as LocSec comes as no surprise to me.

It is my opinion that the ExCom cannot agree amongst its members what role

the local Mensa chapter should play in the lives of its membership, much less the community at large. This is compatible with my observations of the active members in the Central Indiana Mensa, as well as social organizations in general.

Some members of a social organization simply do not have enough to do to fill their time. Whether that free time is as the result of unemployment, underemployment, an empty nest, independent wealth and/or good planning, these folks have ample time to volunteer in social organizations. Often these well-intentioned folks are so consumed by the minutia and (dare I say) the politics of the organization, that the social and community outreach aspects of the group are totally overlooked. These folks cannot see the forest.

Other members of a social organization have more than enough things to do with their time. As students, active parents, entrepreneurs, business people and/or professionals, they make hundreds of decisions daily that will affect the lives and fortunes of themselves and others. The minutia and politics of a social organization are a nuisance, not intrigue. Clear solutions are daily fare, not a banquet to savor after famine. These folks cannot see the trees and exit the organization in frustration.

Finally, there are members of a social organization that can see the forest and the trees. Many of these folks are initially activists, hoping to integrate the membership into a cohesive whole by sharing their vision. Appreciation for divergent perspectives is publicly expressed, but conciliation, participation and resolutions remain low. Finally, the exhausted, demoralized activist becomes a bemused observer of the organization, pitying more than censuring.

Greg, may you now enjoy Mensa for the camaraderie of fun-loving, intelligent folks who are fully engaged in actively living their lives. And welcome to Porch SIG!

Heidi L. Moegerle

*[In accordance with the Rule of Three, I infer that the author assigns herself to that third, Weltschmerz-sagacious faction, those who could lead us ably, were we worthy enough for them to do so. She could be right. However, the devil is in the details, and there would be no activities for anyone - not even the "bemused observers" - did not someone take care of all that minutia, such as renting the room and bringing the refreshments. Since we're members, not employees or enlistees, of Mensa, none of us has to feel guilty for whatever level of participation we choose; the only sin would be expecting others to pedal harder so we could coast longer. -Ed]*

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## **Dom Jervis**

### **A Fairy Tale**

Once upon a time, in a land far away, a wonderful event transpired.

It was only a matter of time before the people of the kingdom could no longer endure the status quo. Every year, the usual rulers of the kindom, the evil Cream Dots, took more and more of the food the people produced away from them, until they could barely survive. Worse, yet, the evil Cream Dots regarded lazy people who refused to work, by giving them more and more of the food taken from the working people, as well as keeping more for themselves, of course.

The other class of rulers, the Plain Cubers, occasionally wrested power

temporarily from the evil Cream Dots. The Plain Cubers were better than the evil Cream Dots, though not much better. While they didn't take as much food from the working people as the evil Cream Dots did (though they still took more than they should have), the Plain Cubers were mean to the people of the kingdom in other ways. They tried to force their own beliefs into all of the people, in areas of their lives where the people should have been allowed to decide for themselves.

One day, the people of the kingdom decided that they would be happiest if they could give less of the food they produced to the rulers (as when the Plain Cubers were in charge), but also be allowed to make certain decisions for themselves (as when the evil Cream Dots ruled). By taking the best aspects of each type of ruler, they saw this as the optimal form of government.

For this to succeed, they would have to accept personal responsibility for their actions, since they would not have the Plain Cubers to tell them what they could or could not do. This was fine with them, for they were smart people. After all, they were fully capable of producing and bartering for sufficient food to maintain their lives, even when they had to pay the high taxes the evil Cream Dots levied.

Now, what would these new rulers be called? Since they adopted certain philosophies of each of the existing groups of rulers, they used some of the letters from each name. However, since they also had their own idea, they didn't limit themselves to the quantities of the letters in both names combined.

Guess what happened! Since the people were allowed to keep more of what they made, they have incentive to make more food. In fact, so much was made that the needy people were provided for through voluntary donations by the working people. Those who were just lazy, and not truly needy, were forced to realize that they would need to make their own living, and so they did!

And that, my friends, is how the Retail Brains came to be.

And everyone lived happily ever after!

(For her help with this article, the author wishes to thank his good friend, Anna Graham.)

*[Altho' I'm not usually great shakes on anagrams, even my modest skills can make "Democrats" out of "Cream Dots," which leaves the deciphering of "Plain Cubers" very easy. Work out "Retail Brains" for yourselves. (Hint: Start with "L") This must have been the sort of a life tray someone read to Ayn Rand. - Ed]*

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## John C. Walker

**The Princess and the Peon** © 1994  
[edited for length]

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, there lived a Princess and a Peon. The Princess was very beautiful and the Peon was very smart. The Princess was pampered by her father the King. She had very soft hands because she never had to work. The Peon worked hard every day and his hands were calloused.

One day, the King decreed that whosoever could solve the problems of the Kingdom would be the next king. The next day, as the Princess passed by the

village, the Peon saw her, and rushing to his garden, cut one dozen red Roses. He rushed to where the Princess would pass. As she came abreast of the Peon, he handed her the Roses. She, seeing that he was nothing but a Peon, threw the Roses in the mud and her horse trampled them as she passed by.

The Peon was very sad, because the Princess was very beautiful and he thought that he was in love with her. The next day the Peon read in the village the King's decree that the man that could protect the Kingdom from invaders would be the next king.

The Peon went before the King with many others; he saw many strong and mighty warriors. How can he solve the problem when there are so many mighty warriors to help the King. The warriors wanted to form an army, but there were not enough horses, so the King dismissed them as fools.

When they were gone, the Peon was the only man who was still before the King. The King said, "What would do to protect the Kingdom?" The Peon said. "I would build a high wall around the castle and the village and its lands. This way the village will be protected and the castle and all in it will have food in case of a siege by the invaders." The King said, "This is the best idea I have heard."

"You are the man who will be the next king," the King said. "You will be in charge of the building of the wall, and when you are finished you will marry the Princess, for from now on you will be a Prince." The Peon said, "I will do my best to be a good King." The Peon, now the Prince, went to work on the wall around the village and the castle.

The Prince said to the Princess, "On the day I finish the wall, I will bring you gold and ask for your hand in marriage." As the wall was completed, the Prince walked toward the castle, looking down at the ground all the way. On seeing him, his hands behind his back, the Princess frowned, because she wanted to see the gold.

As the Prince stopped, the King said, "Where is the gold you promised the Princess?" The Prince smiled and taking both hands from behind his back, thrust both hands filled with golden dandelions toward the Princess.

She screamed, "Where is the gold you promised?" The Prince said, "Here it is: there is no brighter gold in all of the World!" The Princess screamed, "You tricked me, you vile Peon; I want my gold!"

The King said, "You have your gold, you spoiled girl; the Prince has kept his pledge. The marriage will take place today."

And they lived almost happily ever after.

The Moral of this story is, If someone gives you Roses, don't turn up your noses; if you have gold on your mind, don't turn down a dandelion.

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## **Helen Schmill**

### **Imagination and Reality**

A curious old woman (71) lives in our town. She still believes in fairies.

She has a shelf covered with fairy houses so the invisible spirits will come and



stay with her. She would rather have fairy companions than a dog or a cat.

Friends who know she is truly fond of the fairies have given her fairy figurines, new and collectable, and a handmade fairy doll in appropriate green. During 1998 she had a fairy calendar in her bedroom.

She collects books of fairytales and faerie lore. She buys the fairies a fresh flower for her home on the Fairy Days (Vernal Equinox, May 1, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox and Winter Solstice), and leaves fruit out for them.

The little children know her belief in fairies is real. This often makes their parents nervous.

The old woman has found herself in two fairydells, the June one by the creek, trimmed with Dead Men's Bells, the Vernal Equinox one by the river bedecked the next day with a lion kill. The fairies chose a ponderosa forest temple by her cabin for their summer dell one year, and grew a gate of green Gentians to preserve their privacy on Summer Solstice.

Fairies dislike her untidiness, One afternoon they threw apples at her in a messy kitchen. (She washed the dishes at once.)

In gratitude and pleasure at her providing them with fairy houses, they left her a true miniature fairy house at the cabin, hidden under a pillow on the porch bench a tiny thing from the forest. She has found their quarter in a boot.

It is dangerous to attract the fairies, say some of the old books, but her front yard was filled with their favorite tree, the weeping birch, when she bought the house.

As proof of their existence, the fairies occasionally show her a bluebird, their symbol of happiness as well as her father's. Or is it her father's gift from the other side of the grave?

Is her whole house a fairy house?

Some think so.

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## MINDBENDING HONOR ROLL

[H = Host]	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Dave A.			♥	♥	♥
Alison Brown	♥H			♥H	♥H
Greg Crawford	♥	♥	♥H	♥	
George Dunn	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥
Carol Gould	♥				
Jud Horning	♥	♥		♥	♥
Jerry Hunter		♥	♥	♥	♥
Jeff Lake					♥
Larry Marcus					♥
Treva Marks	♥	♥H	♥	♥	♥
Nancy White	♥	♥	♥	♥	♥

## SECOND SIGHT

Former Editor Bibi Sandstrom, along with the letter which appears in this issue, sent me two (2) relatively recent reprints of "How To Tell A

Mensan From a Densan," a humor piece now almost old enough to drive. The August 1998 **Spectrum** of East Texas Mensa and the September 1998 issue of **PlainsPeaking**, the newsletter of Plains and Peaks Mensa (Southern Colorado) both ran the item.

MJ Tala's "What is Sacredness?" from December 1997, made the February 1999 Menzia, newsletter of New Mexico Mensa.

Another Mensa Match! Long-time member and former MIND Editrix  
**Karen Bauernschmidt**  
announces her engagement  
to fellow long-time (but no longer local) Mensan  
**Dean Eveland**

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**B** \_\_\_\_\_  
**A** \_\_\_\_\_  
**S** \_\_\_\_\_  
**I** \_\_\_\_\_  
**L** \_\_\_\_\_  
by Basil Wentworth

## 141 PHONY PHONETICS - IV

If a poet wants rhymes for his verse,  
Here's a schtick he might think to rehearse:  
    He could start with a curse,  
    And go on to do worse,  
But the routine is no good per se.

    I have prayed for a rhyme-word for prison,  
    From my youth 'til I grew old and wizen  
        Though my prayer has risen  
        From foremast and mizzen,  
    It still has the sound of an orison.

Want a way to get rid of a fiend?  
A mechanic would have him machined,  
    Or you might have him beaned,  
    Or maybe just screened,  
Or add an "R"; make him a friend.

    There are many words rhyming with seat,  
    A short list, still far from complete,  
        Would be sure to have sweet,  
        And its homophone, suite;  
    And they both have a look-alike: sweat.

The farmer's fields fruitfully flower --  
He toils in them many an hour:  
    In Spring, he's a plougher,  
    (In German, a bauer)  
And when there is hay, he's a mower.

\* \* \* \* \*

    If a word's spelled in such a way you  
    Lack even a tenuous clue  
        To its sound, you go next

To the lexicon's text,  
Which only is wise to do.

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## To Keep In MIND

### Upcoming Gatherings and Events

*** 1999 ***	
March 26-28	<b>Tropical Paradise Cruise</b> , 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, East Lansing, MI
April 16-18	<b>April Fooling Around V</b> Best Western Travel Plaza, Baltimore, Maryland; rooms \$80; Registration \$60; Registrar David Hubbard, 3820 Autumn Way, #1C, Jessup, MD 20794.;
April 30-May 2	<b>SEMMantics XXI</b> ; Van Dyke Park Suite Hotel, 31800 Van Dyke, Warren, MI 48093; rooms \$69 regular, \$89 tower suites; Registration: \$45 thru 4/23 (St. George's Day), \$50 after; Contact Betsy Y. Mark, Ypsilanti, MI. <a href="mailto:BetsyYMark@aol.com">BetsyYMark@aol.com</a>
July 1-5	<b>Orange County AG</b> ; Hyatt-Regency Long Beach, (800) 233-1234; rooms \$99 - \$119; Registration: \$59 to 5/31; Greg de Hoogh, PO Box 53841, Irvine, CA 92619-3841
July 23-25	<b>Columbus Area Mensa Coup d'etat RG</b> ; Days Inn North, 1212 E. Dublin-Granville Road (Rte 161), Columbus, OH 43229 (614) 885-9696, ext 0; rooms \$35 (Mensa rate); Registration: \$40 thru March 31, \$45 thru may 31, \$50 after; Registrar: Marshall Ankrom, Columbus, OH. <a href="mailto:Mankrom@netwalk.com">Mankrom@netwalk.com</a>
September 3-6	<b>Rivers III</b> ; RG Chair: Bob Heasley, Sewickley, PA; <a href="mailto:bheasley@usaor.net">bheasley@usaor.net</a> Registration \$40 (checks to Western Pennsylvania Mensa)
October 1-3	<b>CAMBake</b> Contact Concetta E. Bartosh, Cleveland, OH; or <a href="mailto:DaveMichel">Dave Michel</a> , or MensaPhone (216) 556-1333.
October 29-31	<b>HalloweeM 24</b> Arlington Park Hilton, 3400 W. Euclid, Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1099 (847) 394-2000; fax (847) 394-2095; rooms \$79 (reserve by 10/08 and mention Mensa); Registration \$45 thru 7/31, \$50 thru 9/15, \$55 thru 10/15; \$60 after; Bill Slankard, Registrar, Arlington Heights, IL. email: <a href="mailto:registrar@chicago.us.mensa.org">registrar@chicago.us.mensa.org</a> . Website: <a href="http://www.chicago.us.mensa.org">www.chicago.us.mensa.org</a>

*** 2000 ***	
July 5-9	<b>Delaware Valley Mensa AG</b> (Philadelphia) (Joint AG with Mensa Canada)

*** 2001 ***	
July 4-8	<b>North Texas Mensa AG</b> (Dallas)

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# BULLETIN BOARD

**Positive Change Network:** Fourth Tuesdays 6:15 - 8:45 at Library Services Center, 2450 N. Meridian. Information: 925-9297.

**SPAN Program:** Earn college credit while still attending High School. 10th, 11th and 12th graders who have SAT of 1010 and complete IUPUI placement test may take 100 and 200 level classwork. Info: (317) 274-2660.

**Women of Vision Network:** 5:30 every Wednesday at Cynergi Bookstore, 6358 Guilford. (Broad Ripple) 841-3912.

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

**Friends of Jung:** First Thursdays. Information: 466-9214.

**Holistic Health Care Practioners:** Monthly meetings at First Congregational Church, 7171 North Pennsylvania. Dorothea Mueller Goold, 581-0535, for info.

## MENSA ADMISSIONS TESTING

The next session for proctored testing in the Indianapolis area is scheduled on

Saturday, March 13,  
at 2:00 p.m.

at the Haughville Branch  
Library in Indianapolis.

Call Russ Washburne  
(317) 839-9282

or

Rick Barbrick  
(812) 339-0528  
for details.

Invite your friends!

**Marie Beltrame:** I miss my friends in Central Indiana Mensa! Even though I am now far away in real distance, won't you keep in touch with me in cyberspace? Either [MarieBeltrame@juno.com](mailto:MarieBeltrame@juno.com) or [Beltrame@fls.infi.net](mailto:Beltrame@fls.infi.net)

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## W.R. Mossner

Robbing Rabbit © 1990

There once was a cute little rabbit  
Who had a disturbing bad habit.  
He'd watch for a hen  
To lay an egg, and that's when  
All of a sudden he'd grab it.

The hens in the barnyard complained  
And their spokeschicken succinctly explained,  
"We thought we'd be paid  
For each egg that we laid  
And our flock now feels a bit pained."

They cornered that larcenous bunny  
And told him his actions weren't funny.  
"Listen!" They'd scold,  
"You hereby are told  
You'd better come up with some money."

The rabbit could see that he'd lost

So to the side of the good he then crossed.  
He said, "I won't fight  
For I guess you are right,  
But how much will all of this cost?"

The spokeschicken then said to the hare,  
"These are the terms we declare:  
'All the eggs that you need  
For just chickenfeed.  
Now, don't you think that is fair?"

I'm sure you'll be happy to hear  
The terms were accepted with cheer.  
Your eggs brightly dyed  
Are quickly supplied  
By a rabbit whose conscience is clear.

The chickens and bunny then planned  
A greeting you'll all understand.  
"We hope that the folks  
With our eggs, shells and yolks  
Will have an Easter that's grand!"

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## Rhoda Israelov

### Response to the Rabbi

In the newsletter of my synagogue, Rabbi Shlomo Crandall invited congregants to comment on a lawsuit currently being fought in New York State. The story involves a 38-year-old Orthodox mother of four daughters. She has sued her Rabbi for revealing confidential information to her estranged husband and his lawyer. She is claiming that she told her Rabbi in strict confidence that she is no longer using the Mikvah (ritual bath). In his defense, the Rabbi has stated that he told her husband of the situation to prevent him from having prohibited relations with his wife. She is now suing for breach of confidentiality. Rabbi Crandall explained that the ethical and legal issues involved in the case are far reaching: they are being closely watched by the Rabbinical Council of America as well as by clergy of all denominations. At what point should a rabbi or any clergy member reveal private information? Would it have been reasonable to breach confidentiality if a person revealed to his Rabbi that he was planning a murder? Where is the line drawn? What is the moral and ethical stance that a Rabbi should take, asks Rabbi Crandall? What is the moral and ethical stance each and every person should take, given the same information?

The following is my response:

Dear Rabbi Crandall:

Here are some of my thoughts on the New York landmark case involving religious advisor confidentiality...

a. It is never appropriate for a clergy member or other professional advisor to break confidence, since that tears away the very premise of the counseling process. As a perhaps parallel, let me explain that, were I to lend you my computer for a specific purpose, and you were then to use it for another purpose of which I do not approve, you would be "stealing" my computer time. This woman confided in her Rabbi for the purpose of unburdening her heavy heart and perhaps of seeking guidance for her own life as a Jewish woman estranged from her husband. The Rabbi put a higher value on a "possible,"

that is to say, on the protection of the husband from future sin (the husband might or might not have broken the *mitzvah* of *tahara* had he remained unaware of the non-Mikvah observance), than on an "actual" - the confidentiality he had implicitly pledged by the nature of the counseling relationship.

b. You had raised the question of "What if the Rabbi had been apprised of a murder plot?" In that saving a life takes precedence over other mitzvot, my view is that the Rabbi should then have sought to remove the targeted individual to a safe environment without revealing the source of the danger. In other words, the confidentiality should be preserved up to that point at which only disclosure would save the life.

c. To me, the most interesting aspect of the case lies in the issue of intentionality in sin. In criminal law, the level of intentionality is highly significant, and is recognized in the differing degrees of felony and even of murder (premeditated v. reckless homicide, for example). In the unlikely event that the husband had reconciled with his wife to the point of having marital relations with her, and also presupposing she, of Orthodox persuasion in her own right, would have spitefully allowed marital intimacy without Mikvah, the husband would have committed an unknowing "sin," akin to eating something forbidden out of lack of knowledge of the origin of the food despite reasonable precautions. In my view, at least, that is not sufficiently "horrible" as to warrant a betrayal of the woman's trust in her confidential counselor.

d. It seems to me that this woman must be concerned enough to sue only because she intends to continue her life, in the event of a divorce, within the Orthodox community. Otherwise, why would someone's finding out she didn't go to Mikvah be important to her in the first place? I am assuming there are financial issues involving divorce settlement, but I imagine that only the protection of her good name, as defined specifically by Orthodox Judaism, would be sufficient to drive a woman of religious background through the indignities of a court process discussing her sexual life.

e. In a broader sense, the Rabbi in this modern morality play has set himself up as representing "government," whose task it is to enforce [the law] and even to prevent lawbreaking, or infringements upon the societal rules. While I heartily applaud efforts to reduce crime before it happens when the prevention takes the form of counseling, education, positive channeling of energies in the community, etc., it appears to me that government steps into the oppressive zone precisely when it attempts to "govern" an offense before it has taken place!

If I am not inebriated when stepping into my car, and assuming I am not a minor, no policeman may arrest me on the grounds that, were I to drink all that beer I am carrying home from the grocery store in my car, I would be driving drunk and might kill someone. Let us remember that the woman in New York had no "black marks" on her "driving record" as far as Mikvah compliance in the past (that we know of). I remember learning in Talmud that, even if one sees a man running out of a house carrying a blood-dripping knife, and then enters the home to find a bloody corpse, that person may not assume that it was the murderer running out of that house.

In this case, the Rabbi intervened without even seeing a corpse or a knife! There is no question in my mind but that the Rabbi was over-zealous, thereby causing a lost-lose-lose situation, aired fully "before the Canaanites," resulting in sullyng the good name of Orthodox Judaism's posture toward women in general.

f. As a woman, a Jewess, and a congregant, I deplore this case with its

attendant negative publicity; at the same time I applaud you, my Rabbi, for the deep thought you are giving to the implications of the case and the weight you are according the opinions of your congregants.

*[Rhoda invites her fellow Mensans to comment on her letter; Gentile members may wish to consider these bits of cultural information:*

*- Judaism has no concept of "confession" such as the Catholic Church has; therefore there is no Seal on the Rabbi, as there would be on a priest.*

*- A Jewish woman is ritually impure after her menses, until she washes in the Mikvah.*

*- "Canaanites" are non-Jewish neighbors who might think poorly of the Jews for their bickering. -Ed]*

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## "Honor"

As a word, honor has the distinction of possessing two almost diametrically opposite meanings. One sense of honor comes from within, and usually involves some sort of sacrifice on the part of the person who practices it (for example, the voluntary loss of a romantic partner because of someone else's prior claim, exposing oneself to punitive action in order to uphold an ideal of behavior).

The other sort of honor is bestowed from the outside and almost always results in social or pecuniary enhancement (for example, an honorary academic degree or a monetary bonus).

These ambiguous meanings invite deliberate confusion, such that men (and women) who receive honors are invariably described by their factions as persons of honor, equating the first meaning with the second.

Since the first type of honor, the internal sort, is not quantifiable, it's easy for anyone to claim that he has a lot of it, and that it directs his behavior. There's a test for such statements, about which more in a moment, but at first blush, it makes a sterling defense because hardly anyone feels comfortable asking someone to go against his honor.

An example of the "honor gambit" would be a suspect refusing to name the person who could confirm his alibi, not because that person is fictional, but because his honor won't permit him to involve her.

This leads to the test: since the internal honor is almost unavoidably painful, any claim of honor that maneuvers the claimant into an advantageous position is likely to be false.

Added challenges arise when the person claiming the constraints of honor is an honored person (i.e., an important or distinguished one). More forcefully now, the word itself invites us to confuse self-serving actions with self-sacrificing ones because we think that "honor" has been established.

That, of course, is exactly what spinmeisters and publicists strive to make us think: that those who enjoy privileges ("honors") must have risen to them through the exercise of their great personal virtue ("honor"). After all, aren't they almost the same word?

We may be getting more sophisticated. In the 50's and 60's, long before Watergate and L'Affaire Lewinsky, the phrase, "If you can't trust the President.." was used without irony. The idea was that the man with the most honors must be the most honorable man.

Or maybe not. Despite running scandals, lots of us reflexively assume that presidents, bishops, deans, governors, generals and such are going to behave honorably as matters of course.

Does long practice mean there's something to it? Does honor just naturally manifest itself in celebrity? Or are we being hoodwinked most of the time?



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