

October 2025
Volume 61, Number 10



mind

Mensa Newsletter
Of Central Indiana



Mollie the Mensa Owl hanging out with an appropriate holiday icon

Publishing Statement

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

Contribution Guidelines

MIND contributions may be sent to mind.editor@yahoo.com, or Richard Gibson, 5726 Toad Hollow Ln, Indianapolis, IN 46220. Contributions may be edited for length or to remove offensive material and may not include personal attacks. No anonymous contributions will be published, but the Editor will withhold the author's name from the public on request. Contributions should be submitted no later than the Friday following the ExCom meeting (usually the third Friday of the month) for the following month's edition.

Reprint Information

Mensa publications may freely reprint material from *MIND*. If a piece bears an individual copyright, publishers must obtain a release from the author.

Advertising

MIND accepts paid advertising. Contact the Editor for current rates.

MIND Staff

Editor: Richard Gibson, mind.editor@yahoo.com, 5726 Toad Hollow Ln, Indianapolis, IN 46220

Publisher: Central Indiana Mensa

MIND is published monthly by Central Indiana Mensa.

Subscriptions are \$12 annually for those not members of CIM.

Postmaster: address changes to *MIND*, c/o American Mensa, Ltd, 1229 Corporate Drive West, Arlington, TX 76006-6103. Include membership number.



**Website: centralindiana.us.mensa.org
-or- www.indymensa.org**

Volume 61, Issue Number 10
October 2025



mind

table of contents

Editor's Page	4
LocSection	5
Letter to the Editor	6
Book Group Reading List	6
Mensa Book Group Book Previews	7
Welcome!	8
Halloweem 2025 Flyer	9
Regional Coordinator (RC) Column	9
October 2025 Events	11
Calendar	12
Puzzle Column	14
Theodore Talks	14
Puzzle Solutions	16
Books On the Runway	16
A Boomer Remembers	18
A Trip to the Center of Our Galaxy	19
EXCOM Minutes, 8/19/2025	20
Treasurer's Report	22
Location of CIM Monthly Meeting	23
Contact Information	24

From the Editor's Cubicle

Rich Gibson, Editor

Where's Mollie? Or, Who's that with Mollie?

I need to remind you of a few things: First, Mollie (*Mensa owl-lie*) will appear on the cover of MIND each month with a person or in a place that is appropriate to that month. Second, if you show up to the Monthly Gathering and provide the right answer about her, you'll be entered in a drawing for a door prize. Third, these images are generated by AI; the gap between what I want AI to give me and what it gives me can be huge. So fourth, you deserve a hint: In this picture, is Mollie just small, or is she normal-sized and the jack o'lantern is really big? It's all a matter of perspective, innit?



A few notes, prompted by Margy Fletcher's lamented retirement from Books on the Runway, a monthly book review that I relished reading each month (also, as an editor, I DEEPLY appreciated the couple of pages I could use to assuage the hungry blank empty-paged monster I must wrestle every month). So:

First, the job of book-reviewer is open, and any and all who would like to send in book reviews are most welcome to throw stuff at me. I'd really like to keep the title—Books on the Runway—but I will sacrifice the traditional formatting rather than keep the monster hungry. If you've read a book recently that you really like, please jot down a few thoughts and send them to me at mind.editor@yahoo.com. I'll certainly do my editing thing on them, but you'll get full and sole credit for the effort. Thanks!

Second, I am indeed keeping the BOTR column going, using my own reading and words to keep it going. Sometimes, like now, I'll be staring at the monster with only a day or two before deadline, so I'll fall back on a book I really like for which a review practically generates itself without much of my conscious involvement. Once again, traditional format may suffer. This month's offering covers a well-beloved series that a) not everyone seems to know, and yet b) is a highly esteemed collection of fantasy and humor that earned its author a knighthood. If you don't know who I mean, by all means read the review. If you get intrigued enough to check the series out, rest assured your local library is bound to have some.

As ever, I hope you enjoy this issue. There's original content, poetry and anecdotes, puzzles, and notifications of events that you can participate in, both Zoom and in person.

Fall is beginning! Leaves are turning! Get out there and enjoy! All the best.

LocSection

Jan Pfeil Doyle

Kudos – Congratulations to **Jen Clark** on becoming a certified American Mensa Proctor! With the help of proctor **Ann Hake**, Jen completed all the necessary training and is approved to give the Mensa qualifying tests to prospective members. Congratulations also to **Judy Weitzman** for earning a "Cream of the Crop" award for her volunteering with the Hamilton County Democratic party. If you have something to celebrate or know someone who does, please let me know (contact info on back cover)!



ICYMI (In Case You Missed It) – **Ken Koziol**'s talk at the Monthly Gathering was quite interesting. He talked about various ways to find information about your ancestors, the research and sleuthing he's done, and his family's trip to Poland to meet some of their relatives there. Several members thoroughly enjoyed seeing *Hamilton* (the movie) at Flix Brewhouse in Carmel. This last-minute event was publicized in the weekly ReMINDER email.

October Highlights – On the 10th our Monthly Gathering speaker will be **James Lowery**. Mr. Lowery has spoken to our group on Antarctica, the La Brea tar pits, the Wetumpka impact crater, and more. His programs are always interesting. This month he will talk about water management in The Netherlands.

On the 18th, Games & Conversation at **Candis King's**.

On the 30th through Nov. 1st, HalloweeM, Chicago Area Mensa's Regional Gathering. It's one of the largest RGs, usually 500 or so attending. See my September column. More details and register at www.chicago.us.mensa.org/weem/

Don't Forget

- to save your no-longer-needed books, small appliances, tchotchkes, etc, etc. for the CIM rummage sale in April 2026. Proceeds will go to the CIM scholarship fund.

- to give us your Mensa stuff. While you're looking for things for the rummage sale, if you come across any Mensa items, especially old newsletters or RG programs, PLEASE don't throw them away. Instead, donate them to our local archives. Bring them to an event or contact Teresa Gregory or me to arrange a pick up (contact info the last page of *MIND*). Thank you!

- to check CIM's weekly ReMINDER email for changes to events and for new events that were added after the MIND has been printed. We had both occurrences in September.

Letter to the Editor

Teresa Gregory

In the September MIND, the Editor announced the retirement of Margy Lancet Fletcher, long-time contributor of the Books on the Runway column. Looking through the archives, I think her first column was in June 2013. What a legacy! Her reviews were always thoughtful and well-written. She was never locked into a genre which made me think that she read a lot more books than she reviewed. I was curious each month to see what she had read.

I write this because I wanted to thank you, Margy, for your many columns in MIND over the past 12 years. I was MIND editor when you started and, as editor, thank you for being a dream columnist who was always reliable and provided quality content. As a reader for the past 12 years, thank you for all of the detailed reviews that introduced me to books I would have never found on my own. You will be missed. *[Editor's note: You are SO missed, Margy!]*

2025-26 Book Group Reading List

Rich Gibson

Title	Author(s)	Date
Half Earth	E O Wilson	10/12/2025
Revenge of the Tipping Point	Malcolm Gladwell	11/23/2025
The Anxious Generation	Jonathan Haidt	12/21/2025
Boys and Men	Richard Reeves	1/18/2026
Blind Spots	Marty Makary	2/15/2026
The Singularity is Nearer	Ray Kurzweil	3/15/2026
An Unfinished Love Story	Doris Kearns Goodwin	4/19/2026
Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature, and Spirit	Lyanda Lynn Haupt	5/17/2026
Aging as a Spiritual Practice	Lewis Richmond	6/21/2026
4000 Weeks: Time Management for Mortals	Oliver Berkeman	7/19/2026

Mensa Book Group Previews

Rich Gibson

THIS MONTH: *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*, by E. O. Wilson

Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life, by E. O. Wilson, 212 pp (text), published in 2016, will be discussed at the Mensa Book Group meeting on Sunday, October 12th, at 2:00 PM. See the Calendar or Events for more information.

E.O. Wilson was perhaps the most influential and well-known biologist of his day (died in 2021). He wrote over 30 books on biology and life on Earth, won a Pulitzer Prize and many other awards for his science and his writing. In this book, he argues that the (mostly human-made) problems confronting us are an existential threat to our species, as well as to many, many other species on Earth. He asserts that the problems are too big to be solved piecemeal, and proposes that fully half of the Earth's land surface be walled off from humanity and given over to nature. Reviewers claim that his arguments are amply supported by concrete evidence, and that his solution is well thought through and actually achievable. (In 1968, John Brunner won a Hugo award for best science fiction novel with *Stand on Zanzibar*, so titled because at the time the entire population of the planet, if packed together cheek by jowl, would only cover the island of Zanzibar in eastern Africa. Let's call it 1000 square miles to contain 3.5 billion people back then. With today's population of 8 billion, and using Brunner's packing scheme, we'd need roughly 2300 square miles, or 2/3 of the state of Indiana, to hold everybody. So, his plan passes a most basic common-sense test. Another would be to calculate how much area would be needed to accommodate 8 billion people at the current highest population density in the world: Macau, China, at almost 120,000 people per square mile. That gives us a mere 67,000 square miles, which Indiana and Ohio together could easily cover.) So mathematically, moving all of humanity out of half the Earth's surface and leaving it to nature seems do-able. But are his arguments really that sound and strong? Is it practical? How do our myriad nations cooperate to make it happen? What level of persuasion or force is required to move people out of their homes in the nature half of the planet? What resources are needed to create new homes for them in the human half? Are we sure this is the best and only solution? What will be the impacts and the timeline if we shrug and do nothing more than what we're doing now?

Those are my questions after 3 minutes of thought. What are yours? Why don't you read the book, think about it, and come to the Book Group meeting on Sunday, October 21st, at 2:00 PM? We'd love to see you!

NEXT MONTH: *Revenge of the Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell

Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering, by Malcolm Gladwell, 304 pp (text), published in 2024, will

be discussed at the Mensa Book Group meeting on Sunday, November 23, at 2:00 PM. See the Calendar or Events for more information.

Malcolm Gladwell has been a writer for the New Yorker since 1996, but made a name for himself with his very first book, *The Tipping Point*, in 2000. This is his eighth book. The CIM Book Group's selection of this book commemorates our founding, since his first book, *The Tipping Point*, was the group's very first selection!

Big fans of Gladwell and those reading him for the first time should enjoy this book immensely. It is well written and constructed. His style is rather like a mystery author: he identifies a social or cultural phenomenon, hunts for clues as to causes and contributors, then unveils his conclusions with a bang. It must be noted that social scientists are mostly not large fans of his; in their eyes, he sacrifices nuance and complexity in the service of telling a ripping yarn.

All the same, in this book he illuminates hidden dimensions in such topics or events as the COVID pandemic, the opiate epidemic, how the fate of the cheetah reflects on child-rearing, and the rise of acceptance of gay marriage. He hearkens back to his ideas and theories first aired in *Tipping Point*, and affirms or refines them based on the last 25 years of history.

This book can induce spirited discussions about his assertions, findings, and techniques; it should be fun! Hope you can join us at 2:00 PM, Sunday, November 23. You'd be most welcome.



John Fleming	Indianapolis	IN	Joined
Ashley Powell	Worthington	IN	Joined
Lavi Zamstein	Indianapolis	IN	Move In



Hosted by Chicago Area Mensa
Westin Chicago North Shore
601 N. Milwaukee, Wheeling, IL 60090
Join us for four days of righteous
throwback 80s fun!

- **Multiple tracks of programs to keep you intellectually stimulated!**
- **Lavish and plentiful hospitality!**
- **24-hour games room!**
- **Lots of scheduled tournaments, including our annual poker tournament, pub trivia, and nightly Werewolf!**
- **Pun-tastic costumes in Friday night's costume parade!**
- **Extend your pinkies during Saturday night's Pretentious Drinking AND Epicurean Experience!**



Only \$140/person if you register by October 17th!
Day rates available. Scan the QR code or visit

<https://chicago.us.mensa.org/weem/register.php>

RC4NC (Regional Coordinator 4 North Central)

Beth Weiss

Experiencing Gatherings, American and European

The European Mensa Annual Gathering (EMAG) draws members from around the world, and this year's event in Cardiff, Wales, came just a month after the American AG in Chicago. Attending both back-to-back was a fascinating reminder that every Mensa gathering has its own unique vision.

At the American AG, the focus is very much on people. There's a large hospitality suite, SIG rooms, speaker sessions throughout the day, and shared meals—breakfast



and lunch together. The hotel itself becomes the central hangout space, making it easy to run into familiar faces again and again.

By contrast, the British Mensa AGs and this summer's EMAG put their emphasis on exploring the local area. Cardiff offered a wealth of tours, many of which sold out months in advance—"you snooze, you lose." We enjoyed the Welsh Food Tour and a gin distillery visit, but since there wasn't a central event hotel, I didn't often cross paths again with the people I met on those excursions. The exceptions were the wonderful opening icebreaker and closing gala, which brought everyone together.

That's the magic of Mensa gatherings—each one has its own flavor.

Experiencing them gives you fresh perspectives and new connections. We're already eyeing EMAG 2026 in Montenegro and EMAG 2027 in Austria.

Building Events Closer to Home

Have you been to a local event lately? Local group leaders work hard to create opportunities, but they're usually stretched thin—and always grateful when members step up to host something new.

I know it can feel discouraging to hear, "If you want an event near you, you'll need to plan it." I prefer to think of it as, *if you build it, they will come*. Mensa is a "build-your-own" organization. Every event starts with one person who imagines it and makes it happen. If you've been waiting for something new in your area, maybe you're the person who can bring it to life. Contact someone on your local Board—they'll be happy to help you make it happen!

Special Election for RVCs

A Special Election is underway for new Regional Vice Chairs (RVCs) in Regions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10. Region 4 members can submit petitions and sign those of other candidates. Details, including candidate petitions, at:

us.mensa.org/lead/amc/election/amc-2025-special-election

If you've ever thought about leadership at the national level, consider running. Serving as an RVC is about more than governance—it's about shaping priorities, influencing direction, and contributing to Mensa's future.

Mark Your Calendars

- **HalloweeM 2025:** Chicago Area Mensa's annual Regional Gathering, October 30–November 2, 2025. Details on Chicago Area Mensa's website.
- **Mind Games 2026:** Washington, D.C. area, April 16–19, 2026. Registration details coming soon.

Stay Connected

As always, I want to hear from you—whether it's feedback, an idea, a challenge your group is facing, or you just want to chat. You can reach me directly at rc4@us.mensa.org or via phone/text at +1 937-902-5161.

And let's keep the conversation going online:

- **Mensa Connect:** Search for Region 4's community on us.mensa.org.
- **Facebook:** facebook.com/groups/americanmensaregion4.

October 2025 Events

Indy Lunch Bunch – 1st and 3rd Wednesday

10/1, 12:00 noon ET - Virtual *Online*

10/15, 12:00 noon ET - MCL Restaurant and Bakery, 2370 W. 86th St, Indianapolis, RSVP Karen Steilberger, steilkr@sbcglobal.net

LIVE Ham ‘n’ Eggs (Hamilton County Eggheads) – 1st Saturday

10/4, 10:00am - 12 noon ET - Atrio, 11700 Illinois St, Carmel, IN, (located at IU Health North) RSVP: Jen Clark jclark7251@gmail.com

LIVE Mensa Chowhounds Lunch – 2nd and 4th Wednesday

10/8, 2:00pmET- IKEA, 11400 IKEA Way, Fishers, IN (The restaurant has its own entrance on the east side of the building.)

10/22, 2:00pm ET - The Local, 14655 Gray Rd, Westfield, IN

Late lunch or early dinner? You decide!

For more information or to RSVP Bob Zdanky at 317-912-3590.

VIRTUAL Sunday Social – Some Sundays (check the calendar) from 7:00pm

–8:30pm ET Drop in any time for casual chat. Contact: Teresa,

ag18tg@yahoo.com.

LIVE Supper Before the Meeting - 2nd Friday

10/10, 5:00pm - 7:00pm ET

The Burger Joint, 5450 E Fall Creek Pkwy N Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46226

RSVP Jan Pfeil Doyle, 317-431-3500 (voice or text) or jan@mw.net

VIRTUAL and LIVE Monthly Gathering - 2nd Friday,

10/10, 7:00pm – 11:00pm ET

All Souls Unitarian Church, 5805 E. 56th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46226. See last page of MIND for map and directions. Members: \$7.00, Non-Members:

\$10.00; Children 6- 18: \$5.00, under 6: free.

James Lowery will present on water systems in the Netherlands.

VIRTUAL and LIVE Book Group **DATE CHANGE**

10/12, 2:00pm E

Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight For Life–E. O. Wilson

For more details, to RSVP, or for Zoom link, contact Rich Gibson at

hoot.gibson.tds@gmail.com or 770-548-5217.

LIVE Games and Conversation Night – 3rd Saturday, Even Months

10/18, 7:00pm – 10:30pm ET

Westfield, IN

Join Candis and Robert King for an evening of Games & Conversation. **Please call 630-642-9063 or 630-253-1350** to indicate you will be there and to get the address.

LIVE Mensans Dining Out - 3rd Sunday

10/19, 6pm ET

Nori, 3400 Nancy Street, Suite E, Westfield, IN **For more information or to**

RSVP, contact Bob Zdanky at 317-912-3590.

October 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
			1 *Lunch Bunch*
5 Mensa Testing; *Sunday Social*	6	7	8 Chowhounds
12 Book Group; *Sunday Social*	13	14	15 Lunch Bunch
19 Dining Out	20	21 * ExCom*	22 Chowhounds
26 Mensa Testing; *Sunday Social*	27	28	29

Virtual Zoom Events

Important Info for In-Person Events: Be Kind!—As we are entering cold and flu season, if you're not feeling well or have any symptoms such as a fever, cough, runny nose, COVID, etc, PLEASE be courteous to your fellow members and don't attend.

■

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4 Ham'n Eggs
9	10 Monthly Gathering	11
16	17	18 Games Night
23	24	25
30	31	

If you lose your *MIND* (oh, my!) or want additional information, check www.indymensa.org or the weekly CIM ReMINDER in your Monday email.

Puzzle Column

Written by Alan Stillson of Greater Los Angeles Mensa and reprinted with permission of the author (<http://stillsonworks.com>)

Words containing OCT.

Find words containing OCT, in that order, but not necessarily consecutive, based on the counts and the crossword-style clues.

Example: Build (9 letters) = c**O**nstru**CT**.

1. A common shoulder injury (11 letters)
2. Total agreement (8 letters)
3. A programmer's guide (9 letters)
4. A medium-sized wild cat (6 letters)
5. A possible new hire (8 letters)
6. A tool for seeing things from a different angle (10 letters)
7. A formal member of the conversation (12 letters)
8. A place that a kegler seeks (6 letters)
9. The draft (12 letters)
10. A doctor who is the butt of many jokes (12 letters)

Solutions on page 16

Theodore Talks

Brad Lucht

U.S. First Ladies: More Than the Women Behind the Men

This virtual event will take place on Zoom
October 26 at 2:30 p.m. Central Time (3:30
Eastern, 12:30 p.m. Pacific).

NOTE: This is the **final** Theodore Talk for 2025.

The complete 2026 schedule will appear in the January *Mensa Bulletin*.

Since Martha Washington was greeted by her husband in New Jersey and escorted to the nation's first capital in New York on the presidential yacht with a multi-gun salute and cheers, the presidency has been a partnership between the president and his spouse. Because the U.S. President is both head of government and head of state, the head of state responsibilities to perform rituals and engage in social activities often requires the help of a spouse or surrogate. For over 200



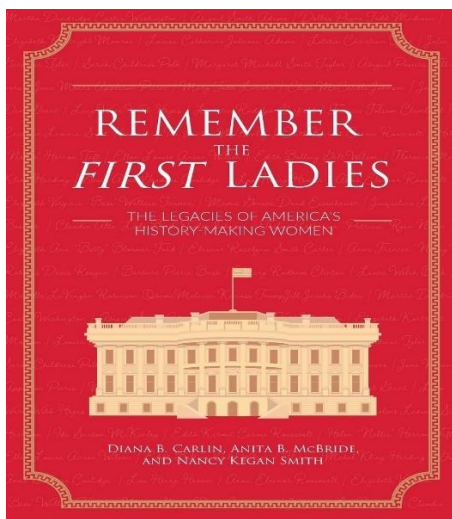
years, presidential spouses have served the country through “soft power”—using social functions to bring people together and to even create a bipartisan environment. But they have done much more, especially since Eleanor Roosevelt took the role in new directions.

Presidential wives were not always called “first lady” and they were not always able to use their influence publicly, but they exerted influence in other ways that shaped history. Little is taught in American History classes about the women who served their country in a role that is not legislated or constitutionally created, that has no rulebook, and receives no monetary compensation. Until Rosalynn Carter, they didn’t even have official office space.

Dr. Diana B. Carlin, Professor Emerita of Communication at Saint Louis University and co-author of [*Remember the FIRST Ladies: The Legacies of America’s History-Making Women*](#), will take you behind the scenes in the Washingtons’ President’s House and the White House and inform you how these women helped make history.

Register for this presentation at <https://tinyurl.com/296t52xw>. Won’t be able to attend the talk? Go ahead and register anyway; a link to the recording will be sent to you once the talk is over. All Theodore Talks have Closed Captioning enabled. Theodore Talks are offered **free** to all members in an effort to provide more value to your membership.

Questions? Contact Brad Lucht at MensaTheodoreTalks@gmail.com



Puzzle Solutions

1. A common shoulder injury (11 letters) = dislocation
2. Total agreement (8 letters) = lockstep
3. A programmer's guide (9 letters) = flowchart
4. A medium-sized wild cat (6 letters) = ocelot
5. A possible new hire (8 letters) = prospect
6. A tool for seeing things from a different angle (10 letters) = protractor
7. A formal member of the conversation (12 letters) = interlocutor
8. A place that a kegler seeks (6 letters) = pocket
9. The draft (12 letters) = conscription
10. A doctor who is the butt of many jokes (12 letters) = proctologist

Books On the Runway

Rich Gibson

Author: Sir Terry Pratchett

Title: *Discworld* (A series of novels)

Publisher: Harper

Years: 1983-2015

Has Been Read by: Rich Gibson

Book Description: (*Disclaimer:* I had hoped to write about a single book, but I think it better to provide an overview of the series as a whole.) Sir Terry Pratchett wrote 41 books set in the Discworld, a tiny pocket of a/the/our (?) Universe that is ruled by magic, yet is populated by creatures whose behavior bears an uncanny resemblance to you, me, and that odd one who sits by themselves over there in the corner. Human, dwarf, troll, fairy, werewolf, vampire, golem, or orc; you note their customs, their reaction to unforeseen events, their general approach to life, and you'll think, "Yep, that could be me...or you...or weird old Uncle Seymour." The Discworld books have been called the funniest contribution to English literature since P.G. Wodehouse, and that is high praise indeed.

So, a few introductory notes:

- Discworld is a flat planet balanced on the backs of three enormous elephants perched on the shell of Great A'Tuin, a ginormous turtle swimming through uncharted space. It seems to have a destination in mind, but nobody knows what or where it is.
- There are 41 books in the series. Each story is self-contained, so it wouldn't spoil your fun to read them in the order you find them. I picked up *Jingo* (21st) as my first foray into the Discworld, and thereafter read whichever I could find next. I am only now re-reading them in order. The big benefit is, you get to watch all the recurring characters grow—not that they grow *up*, all of them, but they do grow. Subredditors who have read every book multiple times tend to agree that in the first few books—*Color of Magic*, *Light Fantastic*—Pratchett is developing his voice.

The full Discworld experience can be found in the fourth book, *Mort*.

- The series can be subdivided into about five groups:
 - o The City Watch—the police force of the Discworld’s largest city, Ankh-Morpork
 - o The witches of Lancre—Granny Weatherwax, Nanny Ogg, and a third position that has been held by two young women as the series progressed
 - o Unseen University—staffed by wizards and set in Ankh-Morpork
 - o Tiffany Aching—a twelve-year old witch just learning her powers who lives in shepherding country. She is supported ably by a tribe of Pictsies: six-inch tall, pugnacious, red-haired creatures, and dyed in blue all over (Picts + pixies)
 - o Death— The personification. Death has the robe, the skull, the scythe; but also insatiable curiosity about people. Death is becoming somewhat human. All other characters speak dialogue in quotations, but Death ONLY SPEAKS LIKE THIS. It’s a voice that disappears from memory almost instantaneously.

The major attractions of these books to me: First, Pratchett’s sense of humor and language are amazing. See above about Picts, a Roman-era tribe living in what is now Scotland that gave the Roman fits; and pixies, small sprites that can be helpful or mischievous. The first Tiffany Aching book is titled *Wee Free Men*, and is a play on the Wee Free, a small Scottish religious sect. Second, each book takes on a feature of human existence, culture, or society, transfers it to Discworld, and skewers it mercilessly. *Jingo* takes on war, nationalism, and racial/cultural stereotyping. *Equal Rites* attacks sexism—a little girl wants to be a wizard, not a witch—harrumph! *Carpe Jugulum* (a great example of Pratchett’s facility with language—it’s mock Latin for “Go for the throat”) is about vampires, changing with the times (whatever that means), meeting expectations, and complying with or violating cultural norms (Playing the Game).

Third, there is a warm, beating heart to each book. Sam Vimes, protagonist of the City Watch subseries, grows from an alcoholic patrolman to a hero for our times (or any time and all times), a passionate upholder of Doing What’s Right, not what’s convenient. Sam never takes the easy way out. He stops a war in *Jingo* by arresting the entire aristocracy of his city-state.

Has this series changed the way you think, your attitude toward life, or even your life itself? If so, how?

Pratchett has one lesson to teach, and it bears learning and re-learning as often as possible: Humanity and human societies and cultures are ridiculous and absurd. You might as well laugh at it, because it’s funny; but you need to love it, too.

Who should definitely read these books? Why?

Anyone who likes laughing. If you're sad or depressed, dig into one of these and you'll feel better fairly soon. This is also true of Wodehouse.

How long might it take to read a book in this series?

Each book runs about 300-350 pages, but is an easy read. If you're dedicated, a couple of days, tops

Provide a short characteristic section, an awesome sentence, or an inspiring quote:

Pratchett uses footnotes freely, and each is wonderful. A short example from *Unseen Academicals*:

Technically, the city of Ankh-Morpork is a Tyranny, which is not always the same thing as a monarchy, and in fact even the post of Tyrant has been somewhat redefined by the incumbent, Lord Vetinari, as the only form of democracy that works. Everyone is entitled to vote, unless disqualified by reason of age or not being Lord Vetinari.

A Boomer Remembers--Ancient Technology

Teresa Fisher

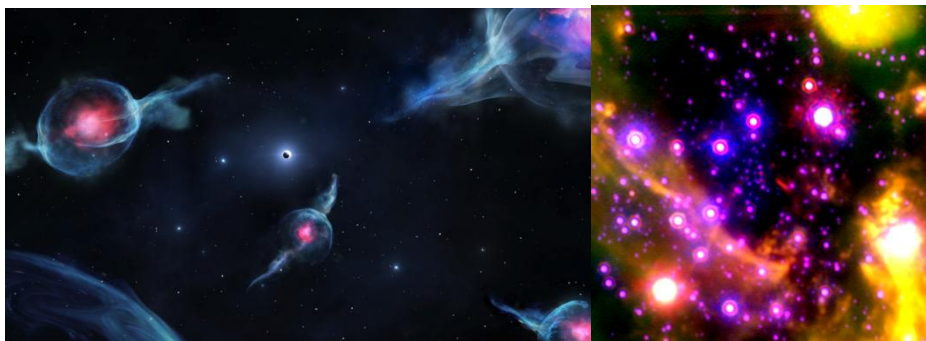
One thing boomers have had a rough time dealing with is new technology and its constant changes. For more than twenty years I was a happy TiVo customer, and people thought I was clinging to old technology. Yes, I was, if by old technology you mean effortless, useful functions that made TV watching an ad-free pleasure. Any changes were easily-learned, beneficial upgrades.

My old TiVo died, and the cable company refused to make the cable card in the new one work. After a nine-hour span where I was on the phone with one tech support or the other, or at the Xfinity store, I caved. I had no choice but to return my new TiVo and accept the cable company's DVR.

I hate watching commercials so much, almost everything I watch is pre-recorded. Many times the TiVo skipped commercials entirely, in an instant. If I didn't hear a word or two of dialogue correctly, there was a wonderful button that rewound a few seconds, so I could hear it again. (I know it wasn't rewinding a tape, but I can't think of a better word.) On shows that required me to fast-forward through the ads myself, the process was smooth, and always restarted the show at the right spot. I could speed up news shows, and the people didn't sound like squirrels. TiVo had two terabytes of storage included, and now in order to have 150 hours, I must pay \$10 extra per month to upgrade from 20 hours.

The DVR from the cable company is clunky and awkward to use, a product badly designed and poorly executed. A very few programs will FF through the ads if *you* start the process. When I must do it all myself, I often overshoot my mark, try to go back, and then overshoot in that direction. (I've invented new curse words.) I'm resigned to watching parts of commercials, or missing the first few words of the

resuming show. If I leave my finger on the pause/unpause button a nanosecond too long, or sometimes for no reason at all, it will FF without warning. There are other shortcomings and disappointments too numerous to mention. If TiVo became available again, I would switch to that old technology in a heartbeat. My main complaint about new technology is that it's so often not an improvement.



A Trip to the Center of Our Galaxy

Anna Ciurlo

Sunday, October 19, 2025 2:30 PM PACIFIC TIME

The heart of the Milky Way is home to Sagittarius A*, a supermassive black hole approximately four million times the mass of the Sun. Although it remains largely quiet today, it is surrounded by a turbulent sea of gas, dust, and exotic objects that could one day trigger dramatic outbursts.

This presentation delves into this extreme environment, exploring the large-scale gas clouds and the closer-in structures that fuel the black hole. It examines how molecular hydrogen manages to survive intense ultraviolet radiation and introduces a newly identified class of enigmatic objects orbiting perilously close to Sagittarius A*.

Observed over two decades with the Keck Observatory, these objects may represent the remnants of stellar collisions or merged binaries, offering valuable insights into how matter behaves under immense gravitational forces. Mapping this region helps to illuminate the intricate interplay of stars, gas, and gravity at the core of the galaxy.

Anna Ciurlo's research focuses on stars and gas around the supermassive black hole in the center of our Galaxy. Her work leverages high-resolution imaging and spectroscopy from large ground and space-based observatories like Keck and the JWST. She earned her PhD in astrophysics from the Sorbonne Paris Cité and pursued postdoctoral research at UCLA. She was an inaugural year Keck

Visiting Scholar at Keck Observatory. Anna continues at UCLA in the Galactic Center Group as an assistant researcher and adjunct assistant professor



This is a Zoom meeting. Please register at

<https://livepresentation.link/OCT>

You will receive a confirmation email from Zoom that will contain the link needed to join the presentation.

Central Indiana Mensa ExCom 8/19/25

Ann Hake, Acting Scribe

The regular monthly meeting of the Central Indiana Mensa ExCom was held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

LocSec Jan Pfeil Doyle called the meeting to order at 7:42 p.m.

Members present: Ethan Blocher-Smith, Emily Boomershine, Jan Pfeil Doyle, Ann Hake, Judy Weitzman

Members absent: Candis King, Karen Wilczewski

Guests: Jon Applegate, Rich Gibson, Teresa Gregory, Pat Milligan

The committee reviewed the minutes of the July 2025 meeting. Judy Weitzman moved that the minutes be approved. Ethan Blocher-Smith seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

The committee reviewed the Treasurer's report for July 2025. Ann Hake moved that the report be accepted as amended. Judy Weitzman seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

The July membership report was compiled by Jan based on information available as of 7/31/25 from American Mensa: total members: 405; 0 new, 0 rejoin, 0 moveins, and 4 prospects. Five candidates were tested this month.

Old Business

The prize money from CultureQuest has been received from the National Office. The treasurer will send funds to the Foundation to bring the CIM Scholarship fund up to \$2500.

Fundraising: Planning for the CIM rummage sale continues. The sale is planned to be held at All Souls in April 2026. Donations of items to be sold are already being accepted; people can contact Judy Weitzman for more details.

The Smart Recipes Cookbook has also been kicked off, and submissions of recipes are being sought. Individuals are encouraged to share their favorite recipes, and can contact Candis King about submissions.

New Business

Jennifer Clark, who has been undergoing the Mensa Proctor training and certification process for the past several months, completed her certification requirements earlier this week. Her information has been submitted to the National Office and she is awaiting final approval from the American Mensa Supervisory Psychologist.

Teresa Gregory and Jan Pfeil Doyle report that there is ongoing confusion at the bank over some paperwork that the bank apparently did not file correctly when we updated the account signatories after the last election. Reportedly, new federal regulations require that a business bank account have a named account owner. It was moved (Ann Hake) and seconded (Judy Weitzman) that CIM LocSec/president Jan Pfeil Doyle be named the owner of the account for this purpose. The motion passed unanimously (ExCom members present and voting: Ethan Blocher-Smith, Emily Boomershine, Jan Pfeil Doyle, Ann Hake, and Judy Weitzman.) A letter will be drafted to this effect for delivery to the bank.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.



Central Indiana Mensa

Treasurer's Report

8/31/2025

Emily Boomershine, Treasurer

Statement of Assets

Account	Balance
(1) PNC Checking – Regular	\$ 2,887.39
(2) PNC Checking – Scholarships	\$ 1,462.00
(3) PNC Checking – Events	\$ 3,902.06
(4) MG Petty Cash	\$ 25.00
(5) CD – First Internet	\$ 10,161.43
Total Assets	\$ 18,437.88

Select Current Period Only	202508
----------------------------	--------

Statement of Activity

Activity	Amount
Receipts	
Monthly Gathering Income	\$ 28.00
National Support	\$ 1,112.84
Interest	\$ 35.43
Scholarship Support	\$ 20.00
Receipts Total	\$ 1,196.27
Expenses	
Facility Rental (All Souls)	\$ (100.00)
Expenses Total	\$ (100.00)
Net Activity	\$ 1,096.27

Mensa Monthly Gathering Location

All Souls Unitarian Church

5805 E. 56th St., Indianapolis

- From I-465 on the east side of Indianapolis, take the 56th St exit west (exit 40).
- Turn left on Channing Rd (1.2 miles from the I-465 exit).
- The church parking lot is on your left.
- Look for signs within the building, meeting in Beattie Room

