DECEMBER 2011

Head-Line

The Newsletter of Mid-Michigan Mensa Number 455



HEAD-LINE NO. 455 DECEMBER 2011
MID-MICHIGAN MENSA

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Head-Line and Calendar items are due by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Camera ready contributions are appreciated, but not necessary. Calendar entries may be emailed, telephoned, or snail-mailed to the Calendar/TGIF Coord. Permission is granted to reprint material from the Head-Line in any Mensa publication, with appropriate credit, unless the material is copyrighted.

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WENDY'S WORLD

Wendy Carnegie,

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving. I did--I hosted the family (11 of us) and we stuffed ourselves. Now, I'm ready to finish my Christmas shopping, get the gifts wrapped, sign, address and mail the Christmas cards, do some baking, and enjoy the season.

I haven't done Holiday baking for several years. This year I'm feeling the Christmas Spirit already. I'm looking forward to baking some of my favorite things: baklava, buckeyes, frosted sugar cookies, pecan balls, thimble cookies and date cookies. I hope my family and friends like them as much as I do because they will receive some.

I'm also going to a couple Christmas shows at the Wharton Center. One is the Empire Brass with The Sound of Christmas and the other is the Celtic Woman: A Christmas Celebration. I'm looking forward to both of them.

Don't forget our Holiday Party. It is so much fun enjoying the Christmas Season and Hanukah with our Mensa family. See the article on page 16 for further information.

I wish you all Happy Holidays, whichever you celebrate: Christmas, Hanukah, or Kwanza.

So Happy Holidays to all and to all a good night!

See you next year.





Frankly Speaking

by Frank Dolinar, LocSec

Snow, short days and long nights, a blizzard of holidays, time with family and friends, and trying to find time for the parties, dinners (including our annual holiday dinner), and the necessity of holiday shopping… these all arrive with the month of December.

I eventually get around to the holiday shopping, really I do. But I always feel like I never get to it early enough, or give it enough attention once I get there. Then there's the trade-off between who to buy for, what to get, and how much to spend – a difficult decision in today's economy.

After much internal debate about all of this, I typically buy a few nice presents for my wife and my immediate family. Beyond that, I usually decide that my time is the best present.

Time may be given directly, spending time with family and friends and sharing in the month's festivities. It may be offered remotely, by calling those you cannot actually visit or writing to them. Christmas cards and letters are an example of spending that time, more so if the letters / notes are individually written.

The spirit of the season is shown by each of us when we reach out to the people in our lives who are important to us. Think about how you can best use your time during this season. Don't give in to the day-to-day time traps that keep you from being with family and friends.

Time is the one thing in our lives that we can never replace. How we use that time is up to each of us. Choose wisely, and generously. If Ebenezer can do it, so can you.

It's your holiday season.
Be part of it.

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reMARK, November 2011

Betsy Yvonne Mark, RVC3

I feel like Santa or Aladdin or a fairy godmother. I have been able to grant wishes of Region 3 members. What a feeling!

First is to publish the following announcement of Southeast Michigan Mensa's Name the RG competition.

NAME THAT RG COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Back by popular demand: name our RG and win a free registration to the upcoming wonderful _____(your idea here) _____ RG!

You will win a free registration for the 2012 SEMMantics Regional Gathering if you suggest the best name and theme for SEMMANTICS XXXIII, to be held the weekend of May 4-6, 2012.

We are announcing a competition, with all current members of Mensa eligible, to name a theme for our RG, the biggest event of the year. Ideas, double entendres, puns, feghoots and other clever word plays are especially welcome, of course. Submit your suggestions by December 20th to Jean Becker. She will remove the name of the submitter and the RG committee will choose the most original, representative, and creative entry to name the RG and provide the theme for its activities.

All suggestions must be addressed via e-mail to Jean at JeanKBecker@gmail.com no later than the above-mentioned deadline, December 20, 2011. You can just submit the name, or you may explain the reason you think the name and theme are the best, up to a maximum of 250 words. Please place the words "SEMMantics name competition" in the subject line. Winners will be announced at the Winter Bash and in M-Pathy.

Here's your chance to have it your way!

Jean Becker

Second is to add the following games to the overflowing three Region 3 tubs now stored by Beth Weiss and Stan Ward for use at events within

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reMARK -- Continued

the Region. I am not a game player, save for Freecell, but the one that I do love is Apples to Apples and I have ordered a crate! In addition, there will be multiple copies of Qwirkle, Qwirkle Cubes and Wizard for tournaments and Big Boggle, Blokus, Ticket to Ride and Five Crowns to bring pleasure to our gamers. Enjoy! Enjoy!

I hope you are attending the Cincinnati Regional Gathering; *Just for Your CAMusement!* in Cincinnati, Ohio, this first weekend in December. It's promised that there will be no clowns. Registration is $70.00; Ages 5 and under are free; Ages 6 to 12 are $10; Ages 13 to 20 are half-price; Friday only $25;
Saturday only $60;
Dinner & Dance on Saturday (after 5pm) $35. *For More Information Contact:*
Marty Meighen
9113 Tag Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45231 or just show up! I wish I could be there, but I am attending the AMC meeting.

Register now for the yet to be themed SEMMantics XXXIII RG, May 4 – 6, 2012, to be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, 37529 Grand River Avenue, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, Call (248) 477-7800 for hotel reservations. Registration: $65 – through 1/31/2012, $75 – through 4/15/2012, $45 – Friday Only, $50 – Saturday Only, $85 – Weekend at the Door, Children 5 - under 18 – 1/2 price, Children under 5 – free. Includes all meals, Chocolate Orgy, "The Evolution of Charlie Darwin", constructing crosswords by James Tuttle & Peter Collins, and MensaSelect game winner Uncle Chestnut's Table Gype inventor Paul Nowak. Of course you expect me to tell you to send your registration fees to me. Sit down! I have finally passed the torch and a very difficult decision it was. I have relinquished my "I'll take your money" moniker. I am pleased to ask that you send your registration checks (made out to SEMMantics) to Larry Arbanas, 24565 Glen Orchard Dr., Farmington Hills, MI 48336-1725. Yes, if you see me I'll take your money for Larry.

I wish you a wonderful holiday season and a safe beginning of winter. And, let me be the first to wish you a Happy New Year. May it be healthy, prosperous and wonderful in every way for each and every one of you and your loved ones.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon. LLAP and Peace,

Steering Committee Meeting

Wendy Carnegie, Scribe

October 14, 2011

Present: Frank Dolinar, Wendy Carnegie, Elizabeth Evangelista, and John Garrison.

The meeting was called to order by Frank Dolinar, Loc Sec at 7:38 PM.

The meeting agenda was reviewed and approved.

John Garrison made a motion to accept the Steering Committee Minutes of the September 9, 2011, meeting as printed. It was seconded by Elizabeth Evangelista. The motion passed and the minutes were approved as written in the October Head-Line.

The Treasurer's report was approved as presented.

Elizabeth reported that she has received some criticism on having TGIFs and speakers at Geurrazi's as it wasn't conducive to speaker presentations.--poor layout. Elizabeth also reported that Grand Traverse Pie Company will no longer accept reservations for the room between 5 and 8 p.m.. With both Geurrazi's and Traverse City Pie Company out of play, Elizabeth is concerned that she won't be able to find another place for the evenings with a speaker. She would appreciate any ideas. Roy Saper will be speaking this month and Lawrence Glazier will speak in November. Bob Barrie has offered to speak to us on cartooning.

OLD BUSINESS

Frank talked with Dr. Zachary Costain regarding the Cyclotron/FRIB tour. The tours last about 1 1/2 hours and are during the day. Frank is checking with people on having a tour at a later time.

John reported that he contacted the Lugnuts regarding concession sales. He was told they have shut down for the season. He said they told him to call back in December when they start planning for next season.

Deborah Frank was absent so there is no report from her.

Frank reported that he is still investigating the possibility of acquiring an IBM community services grant for our scholarship fund. He will provide information as it is obtained.

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Steering Committee Minutes--Continued

NEW BUSINESS

Frank Reported that he received an email from four Southwestern Ontario Mensa groups regarding a Regional Gathering (RG) in Niagara Falls, Ontario. It is to be held April 27 to 29, 2012. For further details go to: www.so-mensa.org.

Wendy Carnegie reported that at the August "Meet in the Middle" dinner, Southeast Michigan Mensa invited Mid-Michigan Mensa to participate with them in their spring RG. We need to check with them regarding what we will get out of it, the dates and a possible conflict with the above mentioned Ontario RG. Wendy will work on it.

There have been complaints about members still arriving early and ordering and eating before the 6:00 PM reservation time. It was reported that these members were rather rude when asked about the earlier time. As politely asking these members to please wait for the scheduled time to order has not worked, perhaps they could be nice enough to sit at one end of the table, to allow those coming at the reserved time a place to sit together.

The next Steering Committee Meeting will be November 11, 2011, at the Old Great Wall.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Math Puzzle

Bob Henderson

What is the largest number you can find, containing no more than one each of the digits 0 through 9, for which the product formed by adjacent pair of digits is a 1- or 2-digit number that also appears somewhere in the original number? 2491836 is an example of such a number: 2x 4, 4 x 9, 9 x 1, 1 x 8, 8 x 3, and 3 x 6 have products 8, 36, 9, 8, 24, and 18, all of which appear within the original number.

Answer on Page 11

Mid-Michigan Mensa Membership

Deborah Frank

December 2011

141 Members

MENSAversaries

Congratulations

34 Years Dean Lawrence
18 Years Sharon Plavnick
13 Years Richard Daniel
10 Years JonathanLelita
7 Years Clyde Creque
3 Years James Glessner III
1 Year David Salsbury
21 Years Diane Brush
17 Years Mary Grzybowski
11 Years Timothy Howard
7 Years Richard Hobria
3 Years Kenneth Bonifield
1 Year Paula Harney

MENSA Birthdays

Happy Birthday

5 Wendy Carnegie
9 Brandi Hodor
15 Carole Eberly
18 Matthew Larsen
6 Brian McGrain
11 Charles Walton
18 Frederick Bies
27 Angela Boldrey

Members preferencing In

Welcome

Genevieve Munk from Grand Rapids



The Plan

TC Shaw

I can remember Oprah pushing a wheelbarrow full of yellow goo onto the stage that represented the weight she had lost. It was absolutely disgusting. (I do not watch Oprah!)

After I had lost approximately 10 pounds I thought,---How could I show off my dieting success?---yellow goo—No!---But,----how about something wholesome like chicken or even a small turkey that I could attach to my body. Dieters could see it and immediately connect and appreciate it.

It couldn't be a live chicken or turkey. Oh no! That wouldn't work at all but, cooked? Hey! Now we're getting somewhere.I could do that.----------

Well folks, that was my idea a few years ago but I've given up on that crazy idea. Can you imagine a grown person walking around with a delicious, mouth-watering, rotisserie broiled or baked turkey duct taped to their stomach? I certainly can't! It's just too radical! You'd have to be bonkers, coo-coo, whacko! And not only that, you'd have to carry a carving knife with you where ever you went. Now, how silly would that look? Homeless people and dogs would follow you around and want to be your friend while others might think you're the meals-on-heels guy or an undercover C.I.A. agent posing as a conscientious dieter with a plan. And beside that, it wouldn't reflect your correct weight loss since your weight is going in one direction while the delicious, mouth watering, rotisserie broiled or baked turkey is going in another as you slab off a snack now and then. Wow! That would be just totally stupid and just how stupid can one person be?

Bologna, I say! Yes! That's right, delicious carbohydrate free bologna! One pound packages will work just fine. Just think of the advantages. As you lose more weight you can just attach a few more slices to reflect the loss or eat a delicious carbohydrate free slice from time to time to ward off those annoying hunger pangs. One pound packages of individual snack sized pieces of delicious carbohydrate free bologna could easily be duct taped under your outer wear, thereby keeping the would-be bologna pick-pockets or undercover, switch-happy, turkey carrying C.I.A. agents at bay. I want to warn you though to stock up as much as you can. Bologna will not be around forever. Smoke-y-Links are rapidly taking over the road-kill meat industry and switching to them would require a totally different strategy and just how crazy would that be anyway? Smoke-y-Links are shaped like miniature hot dogs and anyone

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The Plan--Continued

who duct tapes full sized or miniature hot dogs to their body must be getting instructions from the "Giant Head". I have never, ever seen or heard of anyone in the last two or three months in Gladwin who duct taped Smoke-y-Links to his body and believe me, there are some real whackos in this county.



Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Wendy Carnegie, Scribe

November 11, 2011

PRESENT: Frank Dolinar, Deborah Frank, Elizabeth Evangelista, John Garrison, and Wendy Carnegie

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM.

The complete minutes of the October 14, 2011 were not available due to a layout mistake by the Head-Line Editor, Wendy Carnegie. The Steering Committee decided to reprint the complete minutes in the December issue of the Head-Line. They will be voted on at the December meeting along with the November Minutes.

Frank reported that he has not heard back about the Cyclotron Tour. He also reported that the IBM project is still in progress. The due date for submission is November 15.

Deborah reported the she can get us a poker game at the end of November. John asked if we have all the paperwork in order: permit from the Lottery Board, renewal, City Government Resolution authorizing the event, etc. Deborah asked if she could have some help with project. John volunteered to help. The Steering Committee decided to postpone things until after the New Year. She also reported that the Kelly Pub Night was poorly attended. The New Member Coffee will be at the Edgewood Shuler's Book Store on November 12, at 3:00 PM.

John reported that there is no change regarding the Lugnuts. He is waiting for them to start planning for the 2012 season.

Elizabeth checked with the manager at Grand Traverse Pie Co. regarding not being able to reserve the room and was told it wouldn't be a problem. She also reported that Geurrazi's has a room in the lower level that can be used for our speaker nights. It has an entrance directly from the parking level so those who can't or don't want to use the stairs will be able to attend.

Elizabeth reported that she and Karen Petersmarck have a few speakers lined up for 2012; some confirmed and some in the process. Subjects include: Presentation on the Ingham County Court System by an Ingham County Prosecutor; New Developments and Research on Cancer therapy; Hypnotherapy; and the Vietnam Veterans Project.

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Steering Committee Minutes--Continued

The Holiday Party will be Sunday, December 18 at Elizabeth's home. Further information will be in the December Head-Line.

Elizabeth made a motion to adjourn and Deborah seconded it. Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.



Math Puzzle Answer

Answer: Let's assume optimistically that the largest such number starts with the 3 largest digits, 987. Since 9 and 8 are adjacent, their product 72 must appear somewhere in the number, and so must 14, the product of the adjacent 7 and 2. Since only one 7 can appear, the first 4 digits of the answer must be 9872. Digits 8 and 7 are adjacent, so their product 56 must appear somewhere in the number, and so must 30, the product of its 5 and 6. Trivially, the 14 and the 30 also have products (4 and 0) which already appear inside them.

Based on the above logic, the largest such number starts with 9872 and also contains the digit pairs 14, 56, and 30 in some order. As required, each of the digits 0 through 9 appears only once among these numbers, but in which order do the 3 pairs come after the 9872? 987256 would allow the largest answers still possible, but that doesn't work because 10 (the product of the adjacent 2 and 5) does not appear in our number. 987230 works better, since the product of the adjacent 2 and 3 will appear in our number once we have appended the other 2 digit pairs, 14 and 56. Appending them in order 1456 doesn't work because 20, the product of the adjacent digits 4 and 5, does not appear in the final result. Fortunately, appending them in order 5614 meets all the puzzle requirements, so the answer to this month's math puzzle is 9872305614.

Have a Blast at Mind Games®

by Jared Levine and Jess Byron, Mind Games co-chairs

Thinking about attending Mind Games®? You've heard about it, thought about it, maybe even checked out the website, but what is it really? Here's what you should know before you go.

Mind Games is a weekend-long event that has up to 300 people playing games that have been on the market for no more than one year, testing them out, providing manufacturers valuable feedback, and selecting the Top 5. Every year, Mensa solicits new games of all types (except video games) from the various game manufacturers, from big names to small independent outfits. There are approximately 60 distinct titles in any typical year, and we get to test them all out. Sometimes we're among the first to ever even see the finished version of a game.

When you get your registration packet, you are handed the list of games. Everyone gets the same list, randomized order-wise, so that the first 30 games listed for each person are different. These are your "assigned" games for the weekend – the only games from which you are permitted to vote for the Top 5, which receive the Mensa Select® seal. Throughout the weekend, you are expected to play those 30 games; while you can play the rest of the games with your extra time, you don't have to.

As you play, you try to find the main features of the games. You can provide feedback to the manufacturers on all sorts of items. Some games will be quick to understand and play, while others take longer. There's the occasional dud in the mix, but you'll play many great games over the weekend, some of which you'll be so excited about that you decide to play again despite having many other games to play. These are some of the best moments in Mind Games — enjoy them.

At the end of the fun, frenzied weekend of play, we announce the Top 5 winners and then hold a games give-away. All of the games played throughout the weekend are repackaged, the names of the Mensans in attendance are randomized, and, in order, we get to select which game we want to take home with us – a nice perk of the weekend. If there are any games left over when we hit the bottom of the list, we work our way back up the list until all the games are gone.

For 2012, we are holding Mind Games in Herndon, VA at the Hyatt Dulles, a short hotel shuttle ride from Dulles Airport. Registration includes round-the-clock hospitality and all the games you can play. All meals

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Mind Games--Continued

from dinner on Friday through breakfast on Sunday will be provided, including two buffet dinners provided by the hotel.

The official start time where announcements happen is at 4pm on Friday, but, if you're trying to decide whether to come early or late, err on the early side. Registration will start around 9am, the games are fluffed (prepared) starting around 10am or so; once we've completely finished that process anyone who has already arrived is usually welcome to start playing. We're also looking into hosting some early gaming (not using the Mind Games entries) the night before. To find out additional important information, keep up with the happenings, and ask questions, find us on Facebook (search Mind Games 2012). To register for Mind Games, go to mindgames.us.mensa.org. To make your hotel reservations, go to https://resweb.passkey.com/go/MensaMindGames2012.

We'll see you in Herndon on April 20 when Mind Games 2012 officially begins!



General Trivia

Chiam Greenberg

1. What was the distress symbol before SOS was adopted?

2. Who invented Sadie Hawkins Day?

3. What was the name of the first airplane purchased by the United States Government from the Wright brothers in 1909?

4. What is the motto of the 4 H club?

5. Who originated, "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party" as a typing exercise?

6. In what year did Zsa Zsa Gabor win the title of "Miss Hungary?

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Diabologic: Orbital Trash

by Frank Dolinar

George Carlin's radio news announcer said, "Bulletin! The sun did not come up this morning, cracks have appeared in the Earth's surface, and rocks are falling out of the sky. Details on Action Central News at 7 o'clock. " Letting a broadcast schedule determine when to discuss a planetary disaster is funny.

It's a comedy routine. It's supposed to be funny.

Less funny is the fact that asteroids that closely approach Earth could enter the Earth's atmosphere and burn up. Many asteroids do that, but are too small to do any damage at all.

Should a larger asteroid, such as 2005 YU55, a rock larger than an aircraft carrier, fall to Earth, we'd have a problem about as significant as the dinosaurs did. This near-Earth object (NEO) approached our planet on November 8, 2011, zipping by at a distance of approximately 202,000 miles, or roughly .85 of the distance from the Earth to the moon, at a reported 30,000 miles per hour.

Properly dealing with such NEO asteroids will eventually require long term planning, a fleet of highly maneuverable spacecraft, a means for effectively deflecting the asteroid, and the willingness to show that we really are smarter than dinosaurs – a premise that is, as yet, unproven.

Creating that fleet of spacecraft, however, is a process that presents its own problems.

Principal among these is the amount of orbital trash (aka "space junk") that various space programs have put into orbit as an unintentional by product of the launch process. This extra stuff in orbit is just leftovers – bits and pieces of debris from launches that happen to reach orbital velocity.

NASA's orbital debris program at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, notes that the problem may have reached a critical "tipping" point. It estimates that 19,000 objects are larger than 10 centimeters, half a million between 1 and 10 centimeters, and probably tens of millions of objects smaller than one centimeter – all of them moving at orbital velocity (about 17,000 miles per hour). More such objects are added with each new launch.

There is so much debris in orbit that our launch windows have become progressively smaller and the need to avoid the debris progressively

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Diabologic--Continued

larger. Why? During the ascent stage, launch vehicles are moving ***much slower*** than these orbiting objects. Should the two intersect, significant damage could be done to the launch vehicle and its payload. Orbital debris, whether natural or man-made, can rip spacecraft apart. Not the optimum result when you're trying to put a $150 million (or more) satellite into orbit.

The solution is obvious, but non-trivial. It's basically the same solution for dealing with asteroids -- a fleet of highly maneuverable spacecraft, a means for effectively capturing debris, and the willingness to deal – in the short term – with the situation as the serious problem it is.

The good news? Earth's space-faring nations are starting to pay attention. Orbital debris is a threat to everyone's space program. The bad news? No one will be able to do much about it for several years.

The US Air Force tracks orbital debris and warns satellite operators everywhere of possible collisions.

A design for a new Russian manned spacecraft will reportedly have external manipulators (aka "hands") to be used for satellite maintenance. These could also be used for capturing orbital debris.

The European space agency has proposed launching a spacecraft to add a layer of foam to large objects, to increase atmospheric drag (yes, even in low Earth orbit) and degrade the object's orbit.

Commercial satellite firms know it is in their long-term financial interest that orbital debris doesn't collide with their very expensive assets. Any such collision results in thousands of new debris objects.

The best action is to prevent creation of debris through prudent vehicle design and operations.

Cleaning up the orbital environment is a technical, economic, and legal challenge. Current legal principles restrict nations to salvaging only their own objects. All space-faring nations exhibit acute sensitivity regarding satellite technology. Nobody wants anyone else touching their spy satellites.

Progress will be slow, but the process has been started.

More articles available at http://www.nanosteps.net/Diabologic

© 2011 by Frank Dolinar

2011 Holiday Party

We will be celebrating the Holidays on Sunday, December 18, with our annual gala Holiday Party. It will be at the home of Elizabeth Evangelista, 5275 E. Hidden Lake Dr., East Lansing. This is a sit down dinner, and we will gather about 3:00 PM and eat around 4:00 PM.

Turkey, ham, potatoes, and beverages will be provided. Please bring an appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share.

Following dinner, we will have a White Elephant (Dirty Christmas) gift exchange. This is really a game rather than a gift exchange. It's usually good for a lot of laughs. The gift should be something you have but really don't want (white elephant) that someone else might enjoy--the cornier the better. You can also buy an inexpensive gift. The gift must be wrapped. Make it a first class wrapping job as it helps folks decide which gift to select. (No gift tag is necessary.) The wrapped gifts are put under the tree for people to pick up, shake, inspect and then select the one they want. Numbers are drawn to determine the order of play. Player #1 picks a gift and opens it and shows it to the others. Player #2 can select another unopened gift or take the gift #1 opened. If player #2 takes player #1s gift, player #1 must pick another unopened gift. The game continues with each player having 2 choices: to choose an unopened gift or take someone else's opened gift. If a player takes someone else's gift that player then can take an unopened gift or take a third person's gift. Players can't immediately turn around and take the gift just taken from them. If someone takes your gift and there is an opened gift you would like, you may take that gift instead of picking a new one. This is where the fun comes in--when a gift is repeatedly taken. The game ends when someone picks up the last unopened gift.



TC's Puzzles

TC Shaw

#186

Beloved and friendly sort of guy
Who always claimed that he was high
In lilted voice he would say why
Illegal drugs he would deny
Then softly like a lullaby
He sadly tumbled from the sky

#187

The king, the queen, the commoners
Were there at his command
Gathered on the battlefield
For this historic stand
A brief engagement followed
Now history logs the date
When the Russian who was sent to win
Instead became his mate

#188

You'd think him Noah Webster or a verbalist – if you please
His scientific savvy just rolled off his tongue with ease
He said—'nukular devastation'--Oh! He could really turn a phrase
And he had quite a fan club--He started his own craze
His English elocution had us asking—Whaaaat?
And running for our O.E.D. Well no! Just really! Not!

#189

Aretha got hers singing
While learning how to spell
He laughingly kept searching
Until the curtain fell

#190

A leader and a model
To the pilgrims that he met
Gritty and determined
And as tough as one can get
But those who knew his story
Said it was plain to see
He was on the side of justice
But not a friend of Liberty

Answers on Page 19

Food For Thought

By Barb Ford

I have lived in North Carolina for 3½ years now, and have really grown to love the place. I have discovered so many wonderful people and places that have enriched my life in so many ways. I love to tell you about them.

One of my passions is cooking, and I relish exploring international cuisines. I owe this interest to my Mother. When I was a kid, we would watch travelogues every afternoon on the George Perot show. We had a map of the world on the den wall, and would locate the country featured. Mom would then purchase ingredients and spices commonly used in those far off places and we would cook. Most dishes she created were wonderful. If she were alive today, I just know she would be tuned into the Food Network all the time. I have always gravitated to foreign restaurants to savor their signature menu items. You might imagine how delighted I am to visit international grocery stores, to discover exotic spices and ingredients. Experimenting with them has become a hobby for me.

This is how I happened upon a wonderful grocery store in Winston-Salem called Mediterasia. Owned and operated by a sweet and very informative lady named Homa, this store is a treasure trove of spices and foods from the Eastern Mediterranean region. Homa has taught me how to utilize some of these spices, and I learn something every time I visit this great store. Some of my favorite things to purchase are Kefir cheese, cardamom tea, olives, dried dill, licorice ramzy tea, curry powder, dried beans, pasta, and tahini. The curry powder I get here is labeled “hot,” but I find it wonderfully sweet. The best I have ever used. The items in this store are very affordable, and the advice Homa gives me is priceless. She usually shares a piece of candy and a cup of luscious tea with me as I shop and learn. Homa described to me how to make falafel with ingredients available in the store. I have found it surprisingly easy to prepare, and even more rewarding to eat! She has a very special falafel seasoning (a secret blend of yummy spices) and an herb seasoning blend called Green Zaatar. I use the latter in much of my cooking, and it adds that special something to every dish. The things I find in Mediterasia are available nowhere else in our area. It is located at 3068 Trenwest Dr., Suite 1, Winston-Salem, NC. Stop in to see Homa, and you will see why I love this place so very much. Perhaps I will share my “recipe” for falafel with you in the future. For now, I am enjoying practicing and eating the results.

Answers to TC's Puzzles

186--John Denver # 187--Bobby Fisher
188--George W. Bush # 189--Rodney Dangerfield
190--John Wayne

Think About These

BY John Garrison

Now and then I write down interesting things that I hear. Let me share some of them with my fellow 2%ers.

When you come face to face with destiny do you want to be holding the gun or do you want to be the bear?

There is still hope for humanity, yet?

Jealousy is a cancer that eats you alive from within.

When you are on the road of life don't look back. Someone else may be gaining on you.

You can only begin to mourn when you know all of the facts.

Success has many fathers. Failure is an orphan.

It is not wise to spit on your life before you have fully lived it.

Trivia Answers

1. CQD (I have no idea what it stands for)

2. Al Capp writer of the Li'l Abner comic strip.

3. Miss Columbia

4. We Learn to Do by Doing.

5. Charles Weller

6. 1936

Twas The 110th Night Before Christmas

Stu Knickerbocker

Much to most of us sane individuals we are dismayed when the department stores start gearing up for Christmas after Labor Day when that should really begin the day after Thanksgiving. The business community keeps moving that date earlier each year to get you in the shopping spirit. Eventually, you can expect to hear Christmas music immediately following the 4th o f July fireworks!

Thanksgiving officially begins the Christmas season where you will have the opportunity to watch "*It's a Wonderful Life*" on TV every night for the next 30 days. But for my money Thanksgiving is the best American Holiday. Moreover, it remains a pure holiday, largely unsullied by commercialization. It involves no greeting cards, no tree trim, no perplexed hunt for decorations. I love the fact that all you have to do is sit at a table and try to get your stomach into the approximate shape of a beach ball and then go watch the Detroit Lions lose yet another game on TV. This is my kind of holiday.

The only downside is that the passage of Thanksgiving marks the inescapable onset of Christmas. Any day now--any moment, my wife will announce that the time has come to get out the festive Christmas decorations. This used to be a dreaded moment for me because it meant wrestling with our heavy three section fake Christmas tree with attached lights out of the garage attic. After assembling the brute, pulling out all the branches and plugging the lights in to discover half of the lights didn't work. I was overjoyed to throw the monster out. We then bought a smaller fake tree that fit in a box that was the answer to my long suffering prayers. So simple and took very little room to store. The only problem was only a quarter of the lights would work. As we suspected, it was also made in China, along with almost everything we buy these days.

I almost cried when we returned the tree and we decided just to buy a simple fake Christmas wreath with attached lights. We hung it on the top of the living room drapery rod. After we plugged it in, the lights would only stay lit for ten seconds. Every few hours they would go on again and my wife would yell at me in the den, "Quick Stuart, the lights are on." Ten seconds later they would go off for two hours. That was another product made in China which was our Christmas decoration last year. It became a big occasion for us every time the lights came on for ten precious seconds and we wondered what we ever did to bring the wrath of China on us so relentlessly. Amen.

December 2011 Calendar

Fri., Dec. 2 **TGIF: CHRISTIE'S BISTRO:** It's in the Lexington Hotel, 925 Creyts Rd., Lansing. It's just south of the corner of Creyts Rd. and St. Joseph St.

Fri., Dec. 9 **TGIF: EVERYDAY RESTAURANT:** 1375 E. Grand River Ave. It's In the Brookfield Plaza at the corner of Grand River Ave. and Hagadorn Rd. Chinese food.
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: To follow dinner.

Fri., Dec. 16 **TGIF:RESTAURANT MEDITERAN:** 333 S.Washington Square, Lansing. Foods of Central and Eastern Europe. We'll have a private room.

Sun., Dec. 18 **HOLIDAY PARTY:** At Elizabeth Evangelista's home, 5275 E. Hidden Lake Dr., East Lansing. We'll meet at 3:00 PM and eat about 4 PM. See article on page 16 for details.

Fri., Dec. 23 **TGIF: BEGGARS BANQUET:** 218 Abbot Rd., East Lansing.

Fri., Dec. 30 **TGIF: BAGGER DAVE'S:** 1351 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing. This is a new restaurant in the Brookfield Plaza at the corner of Grand River Ave. and Hagadorn Rd. It specializes in hamburgers, sandwiches, and salads.

Fri., Jan. 6 **TGIF: ALADDIN'S:** 300 N. Clippert St., Lansing. It's in the Frandor Shopping Center next to Video-To-Go. Good Middle Eastern food. This is the night the belly dancers are scheduled to perform.

Fri., Jan. 13 **TGIF: DELHI CAFE:** 4625 Willoughby Rd., Holt.
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING: To follow dinner.

TGIFs are on Fridays. We meet at 6:00 PM and order around 6:15 PM., but you're welcome at any time. Come and get acquainted. All members and friends are welcome at the events above. Any member may schedule an event. Please remember: who, what, when, where, and why. The deadline to schedule an event is the 15th of the month before the event. You can contact Elizabeth Evangelista, Calendar Coord., by regular mail: 5275 E. Hidden Lake Dr., East Lansing, MI 48823; by phone: 517-351-3645; or by email:evangel6@comcast.net