SEPTEMBER 2020

Head-Line

The Newsletter of Mid-Michigan Mensa Number 557



HEAD-LINE NO. 557 SEPTEMBER 2020
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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EDITOR'S COLUMN:

FROM MY BRAIN TO YOURS

by Sharon Plavnick

The months of March, April, May, June, and July all felt a bit timeless. They just…passed, slower than usual it seemed to me. Then August came, and even though I've been retired from a school calendar for many years, I feel the same sense of this month just whooshing by as I get ready for a productive school year to start.

I am so sad for the schoolchildren of America, and for their parents who are struggling to make the best decisions they can about the best educational environment for their children. There are no right decisions here…it's a Catch-22 situation regardless of where you live or what your politics are. My own sense is that if the 2020-21 school year turns out to be a lost year in general, our children who are fortunate to have been born to reasonably affluent parents will adjust and catch up quickly, if indeed they actually lose anything at all. Meanwhile, the children who have always been on the straggling end of the socio-economic measuring stick will see the usual gap getting wider than ever.

I hope my fellow MMMs are able to manage more than just treading water during the ongoing Covid-19 situation. I hope your children and grandchildren are able to grow and thrive in spite of the restrictions they face. I hope you all stay untouched by the virus in your own families. (As I write this, my SO has received the news that his son and daughter-in-law, and their 3 children, who reside in El Salvador, are all positive for the virus.) I hope if the virus does infect you, that you are among the lucky for whom it really is just a week or two of mild symptoms, and then your life resumes its normal pace.

I also hope Mid-Michigan continues to have the amazing summer weather that has allowed me to be out bike-riding just about every single day. Yes, it's been on the hot side, but I wait till the late afternoon/early evening hours, and out on the trails it's a beautiful tranquil world.

Hope you are all finding some measure of tranquility among the mayhem.

What about all of you? If you want to respond to anything you read in this issue, send it along to me at: sharonslp@ameritech.net

LOC SEC COLUMN

Bob's Two Bits for September 2020
by Robert Henderson

We have some positive MMM news to cheer Head-Line readers this month!

Mid-Michigan Mensa had a successful Summer Anniversary Party on August 16th despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to meet outdoors, bring our own food and drinks, and wear face coverings to minimize the risk of virus transmission. We plan to meet again this month for a restaurant dinner, again outdoors and wearing face coverings when not seated.

Assuming that the weather cooperates, MMM will hold our first annual Fall Party at 5:30 PM on Sunday, September 13 at the Amer1can Bistro restaurant, 2328 Showtime Dr, Lansing, behind the Eastwood Mall. Ginny and I scoped it out. They have several delicious dinner choices, and all of the cooks and servers were wearing masks each time we went.

We have reservations for their outdoor patio seating area. To reduce the risk of virus transmission, face coverings are required when not seated. Come and enjoy the company of your fellow MMMensans and friends. . . we look forward to seeing you there! Call Bob or Ginny at (517) 676-3369 for further info.

NEWS FLASH! American Mensa Limited has granted Mid-Michigan Mensa their Emerald Award for meeting the AML criteria for excellence among Class IV local groups (those with 125 - 199 members) nationwide. Only 3 other groups in our membership category received higher Gem Awards from AML this year! Many thanks to our members, officers and Head-Line staff who have contributed their time and efforts over the past year to make this national recognition possible.

RVC 3 AUGUST, 2020 Column

John Voymas

On July 11, 2020, the quarterly meeting of the American Mensa Committee (AMC, our board of directors) was held electronically. During that meeting, the decision was made to remove the phrase "American Mensa" from two Facebook groups: Hospitality and Firehouse and to no longer promote them as the two "Mensa Facebook Groups" on the us.mensa.org website. A committee was later formed to determine how best to transition these two groups to being Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The committee includes a representative from Firehouse and a representative from Hospitality.

This was not an easy decision. During the AMC meeting each of the national officers were given two two-minute opportunities to present their thoughts on each motion. The decision was met with both member support and member disagreement. One thing that was not made clear to the membership is a definition of the problem that we were trying to resolve. I could have done better on that. This article will define what I saw as the issues and my thought process in why I supported these changes.

These two groups were created from American Mensa's original Facebook presence, "American Mensa Facebook" (referred to as AMFB). I was a member of AMFB and when it became clear several years ago that there were two very different sub-groups within AMFB, it was split into the two Facebook groups. One set of interests wanted some sort of rules and milder discussions (including that some topics would be off-limits). That became American Mensa Hospitality. The other significant set of interests was to have a Facebook space where there were no rules set by Mensa and no moderation of any kind by Mensa, where any topic could be discussed. That became American Mensa Firehouse. I joined both Facebook groups.

Since both groups were promoted as "the" Mensa Facebook presence, all members, including those who had just joined Mensa, were encouraged to check them out. A brief disclaimer was on the webpage that promoted these two groups. Some members joined these two

groups and found them to be much too wild and free, especially Firehouse. Since these two groups were promoted as "the" face of American Mensa, some of these members then viewed Mensa as an organization that they did not want to be associated with. Some members did not renew. Some members told their friends to avoid joining Mensa due to some of the posts. Some felt that they were not welcome in American Mensa after joining these group or that American Mensa was a group of extreme right-wing folks and bigots.

Part of the challenge for me was how to balance the need for American Mensa to be viewed in a welcoming light, for its brand to be a positive one. This second point affects our ability to keep dues in check. When we look for sponsorships and relationships that can provide us with non-dues revenue, this is a major factor. Members often express a concern that dues is already too high. We need to increase non-dues revenue. We need to be a "brand" that businesses and other organizations feel good about being associated with.

As a member of Firehouse, I also see a need to have a Facebook group where all topics are allowed and discussed. Colleges and universities used to be that kind of space. Then, politically-correct speech came along, followed by "safe" spaces on campus. Now, students demand that certain speakers are not even allowed to present on campus. The last bastion of open discussion is Firehouse. We need that wide open space where anything can be discussed.

To balance these competing interests, I believe that we need to take the spotlight off of Hospitality and Firehouse in order for them to continue to be who/what they are. There are good people in both groups. Some of the most caring and supportive members of Mensa belong to these groups and help out those in need. By removing the phrase "American Mensa" from the names of the two Facebook groups and by no longer promoting them as "the" face of Mensa, I believe that the spotlight is removed.

By these two groups becoming Special Interest Groups within American Mensa, they can continue to exist as they have been. In fact, this gives them greater autonomy and self-governance. They are still official Mensa

groups just as all SIGs are official Mensa groups. Membership in these two groups can be promoted on a more personal level. In our Local Groups, when we meet somebody who is a good fit for Firehouse or a good fit for Hospitality, we can personally encourage them to join the group. This may not totally eliminate members who are ill-suited to either of these groups from stumbling in but those situations should be greatly reduced when most who join these two Facebook groups are by personal invitations to "check out our family".

I read many of the emails and Facebook comments from all viewpoints prior to the July 11 vote. I will continue to listen to what you have to say. Have a wonderful month!

PUZZLE: Coins in a Row

submitted by Bob Henderson

On a table is a row of fifty coins of various denominations. Alexa picks a coin from one end of the row and puts it into her pocket, then Ben takes a coin from one end of the remaining row of 49. They each continue in this fashion until Ben pockets the last coin.

Prove that Alexa can play so as to guarantee that she wins at least as much money as Ben.

See answer on page 8.

SEPTEMBER 2020

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

John Garrison, Membership Chair

115 Members

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Saif Fatteh	**13**	**Neal Fross**	**16**
Thomas Allor	**17**	**Daniel Thompson**	**28**

SEPTEMBER MENSAVERSARIES

Kathryn Teshich	**2**	**Michael Rademacher**	**6**
Reece Kramer	**7**	**Kristen Kosloski**	**13**
Brenton Wilburn	**18**	**David Brown**	**18**
Paul Kassal	**18**	**Brian McGrain**	**22**
John Larson	**30**	**William Deary**	**32**
Walter Syroid	**34**	**Linda Harrison**	**35**

LEAVING GROUP - Bye

Benjamin Misra

NEW TO GROUP - Welcome

Wendy Crowley	**East Lansing**
Byron Williams	**Holt**

AMERICAN MENSA BADGE

I imagine readers have all received several notices from American Mensa regarding claiming your “achievement badge.” I wasn’t particularly interested in claiming it, so I simply ignored the emails as they piled into my inbox. I did however receive the following letter from a Mensa member named Diana Helenna, of Spokane, WA, who sent her letter out to newsletter editors across the country, asking us to publish it. I am doing so, because I found her letter interesting, and perhaps you will too. I did not look beyond the surface of the badge award…it struck me as just another marketing ploy, but one I didn’t care to participate in. It obviously struck her quite differently.

Dear Mensa
I recently found in my email inbox a notice of my being awarded a "BADGE". I was instructed to accept this badge without being told what the badge signified, what it was for, what I was supposed to have done to be awarded it, or how it would change or affect my status within Mensa. I clicked on a link that indicated I could "learn more".
What I learned was not any of the above sought-for information. What I learned was this badge-making organization that Mensa has partnered with is an over-arching SOCIAL CREDIT ORGANIZATION. Yeah, in the business of awarding people fictitious and virtual-only "badges" for which there is no explanation, and which are used only for "advancing" one's social credit standing with workplace bosses, creditors, social entities, etc.

IN OTHER WORDS, THIS ORGANIZATION, CALLING ITSELF "CREDLY", HAS AS ITS SOLE PURPOSE THE CREATING, PROMOTING, AND ADVANCING OF a SOCIAL CREDIT SYSTEM SIMILAR TO THE CHINESE SOCIAL CREDIT SYSTEM. I FIND THIS a HIDEOUS DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL, AND MORE REPREHENSIBLE YET THAT THE MENSA LEADERSHIP WOULD PARTNER WITH THIS ORGANIZATION AND PROMOTE THIS IDEA WITHIN MENSA. ALL VIEWS AND ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE SUPPOSED TO

BE TREATED EQUALLY WITHIN MENSA, AND A SOCIAL CREDIT SYSTEM DESTROYS THAT BY ITS VERY EXISTENCE.
I REFUSE THE BADGE, WHATEVER IT IS FOR. I STILL HAVE NO CLUE AS TO ITS NAME, SIGNIFICANCE, OR CATEGORY.
I REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN A SYSTEM OF "ENHANCING" SOME MEMBERS FOR NO APPARENT REASON. EVEN IF IT STARTS OUT BY "ENHANCING" EVERYONE, ITS END GOAL IS TO DIVIDE, TO MANIPULATE, AND TO SUBORN.
I REFUSE TO BE USED AS A PAWN TO FURTHER A POLITICAL AGENDA THAT I ABHOR.
TO QUOTE ONE OF MY FAVORITE MOVIES: WE DON'T NEED NO STINKING BADGES!

What do you all think? Is this simply a fringe opinion, worthy of disposal to the circular file? Does she have some valid points, mixed in with some conclusions that are leaping light years away from any evidence? I'm interested to know what you all think.

Send your thoughts/comments to sharonslp@ameritech.net.

Puzzle Answer:

Before choosing which coin to take first, Alexa starts counting from one end of the row and finds the total value of the odd coins (#'s 1, 3, 5, . . .) vs. the even coins (#'s 2, 4, 6, . . .). If the odd coins have the higher total value, she picks coin #1, leaving Ben to choose from between even coins #2 and #50. If Alexa proceeds in her following turns to pick coins from the same end of the row that Ben just picked from, she will end up with all the odd coins and Ben will have pocketed all the even coins. Of course, if the even coins have more total value, her first pick should be coin #50. . . Either way, at the end of the game she will win at least as much money as Ben.

MEET A FELLOW MENSAN
Meet Saif Fatteh

Your first job/best job/worst job/dream job
---First Real Job: Actuary at Hewitt Associates Best Job: Head Tennis Instructor at the MSU University Club for the summer and ate free Burger King everyday. Worst Job: Partnered with another physician who was volatile Dream Job: Have it now, have my own practice.

Pet peeve(s)
----Excuses

Night owl or early bird
--Night Owl

Favorite season
---summer, heat heat and more heat

Marriages/Divorces/Children
------Married once for 19 years then Divorced (once), 3 children

Favorite travel experience
-------traveled to England, India and Virginia (my brother lived there) after college by myself before starting my job

What you like best about being a Mensan
------being able to tell people im in it

Earliest childhood memory
---a classmate in kindergarten vomiting on stage next to me

Something important you learned in HS
-----Some people do enjoy my company

Educational background
---Okemos High School, BS from the University of Michigan, Grad School at the U of Texas and Xavier University (MD & MBA) , Residency at MSU

Hobbies/interests
----basketball (watching and playing), tennis, most sports. my children

Favorite food(s)
Mexican and indian

At the top of your bucket list
---Dont have a bucket list, I take life as it comes

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you want this feature to continue, please respond to some of these. Don't overthink it…one or two sentence responses are just right. Skip any Qs that you don't want to answer. Please don't be shy. This is YOUR newsletter….please participate.

Send your response to: sharonslp@ameritech.net

- **Your first job? Your best job? Your worst job? Your dream job?**
- **Pet peeve(s)? (No more than 3**
- **Night owl or early bird?**
- **Favorite season?**
- **Marriages/Divorces/Children**
- **Favorite travel experience**
- **What you like best about being a Mensan**
- **Earliest childhood memory:**
- **Something important you learned in HS**
- **Educational background**
- **Favorite travel experience**
- **Hobbies/interests**
- **Favorite food(s)**
- **At the top of your bucket list**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Barb Ford

Sometimes I must have something sweet. Since I do not get out to shop much anymore, I decided to raid the pantry for ingredients for a bar cookie. Well, this forage turned out nicely.
Easy, tasty, and they freeze well. Give this recipe a go.

Barb's Coconut Bars

Ingredients:

1 16 Ounce bag Mrs. Thinster's Toasted Coconut Cookies (Costco Size)
¼ t Sea Salt
1 14 Ounce Can Sweetened Condensed Milk
1 C Organic Unsweetened Finely Shredded Coconut
1 C Semi-Sweet Mini Chocolate Chips

Directions:

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Generously grease an 8x8 baking pan. In a food processor, whiz up the whole bag of cookies until finely crumbled. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients until uniformly mixed. Pat mixture into the greased baking pan and bake for 30 minutes, or until the top is bubbly and toasty. Cool 20 minutes. Bars may be more easily cut if the whole pan is turned out onto a cutting board and cut with a large knife.
These bars are sticky, but yummy.
Freeze whatever does not get devoured.

"The last taste of sweets is sweetest last."

William Shakespeare, Richard II

TREES

Your editor has unintentionally stumbled upon a theme for her fiction reading this year. It started with *The Overstory*, by Ricard Powers, my book club's selection back in March. Later, I read *A Good Neighborhood*, by Therese Fowler. And last night I finished *Greenwood*, by Michael Christie. Trees… the ecology of trees, the biology of trees, the universal appeal of trees, the conservation of trees…all these topics are in the backdrop of the engaging stories of the people who interact among these trees. I highly recommend all three of these books. I myself have always felt a special kinship with trees since Tolkien made forests come alive with ents, and entwives, and entings.

So I'll end this month's issue with these quotes about trees. Just because.

> "The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness." John Muir

> "The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." Ralph Waldo Emerson

> "Love the trees until their leaves fall off, then encourage them to try again next year." Chad Sugg

> "A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people. " Franklin D. Roosevelt

> "Trees are poems that the earth writes upon the sky." Kahlil Gibran, Sand and Foam

SEPTEMBER 2020 CALENDAR

Fri. Sept. 4	**TGIF -** CANCELLED
Fri. Sept. 11	**TGIF -** CANCELLED
Sun. Sept. 13	**MMM Fall Party:**Amer1can Bistro, 2328 ShowtimeDr, Lansing, on the north side of Eastwood Towne Center. We have 5:30 PM reservations for outdoor seating in their patio area. Face covering required when not seated.
Fri. Sept 18	**TGIF -** CANCELLED
Fri. Sept. 25	**TGIF -** CANCELLED
Fri. Oct 2	**TGIF -** CANCELLED

Beyond Oct. 2: See the October Head-Line or the Web Calendar for updates.

TGIFs are on Fridays. We meet at about 5:30 PM and order about 5:30 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**, **Where**, **When**, and **Why**. The deadline to schedule an event is the **15th of the month before the event**. Contact Ginny Brunke Henderson, Calendar Coord. at: gbrunkh@peoplepc.com or 517-676-3369
Calendar event information can also be found on the Mid-Michigan Mensa website at http://midmichigan.us.mensa.org/calendar.html