



Regional Rep Rap

by Dave Stubbs



Several months ago, I mentioned in this column that the Mensa Canada National Board had decided to issue 25 year membership certificates, and that all members who, as of 2007, had held continuous Mensa membership for at least 25 years would receive these in 2007. Unfortunately, due to the large number required in this initial year, many of these certificates have not yet been completed and mailed. This issue is being rectified, and the awards should be in the mail shortly.

As of the end of 2007, membership in Mensa Canada stood at 1824. Of this total number, 345 called BC home, which means that this province continues to account for almost 20% of the total Mensa membership in Canada.

By the time you read this, I will have attended the semi-annual 'face-to-face' Mensa Canada National Board meeting in Toronto. This should produce a number of issues of interest to the local membership, and I will report on these in the next issue of Lumens.

All the best for 2008. ☺



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Leo's Speakers Group

Feb 27/08 Rebecca Temmer "Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance"
A documentary being shot in England.

Mar 26/08 Panel of speakers "Alternative Investments"
How does non-traditional investing diversify a portfolio?

Editor's Letter

by Lisa Le Blanc



Dear Readers

Welcome and Happy Valentine's Day. The day for lovers and all things loving. Yes, you might say it's just another Hallmark holiday, but isn't it great to have a day to just remember to love someone?

Time again for the Annual General Meeting. This year's AGM will be held at Sheila Gair's house (14372 Ridge Crescent, Surrey) on March 1st at four in the afternoon. All members are invited. You must have paid your dues to vote or run for office. Potluck follows the AGM so come on out and socialize. I'd like to mention to new members who may not have been to many mensa events yet, that my first mensa meeting was an AGM, just a few short years ago. I found it was a great way to get an overview of how things work and get to know a few folks.

This issue, read about Elizabeth's book review on Krakatoa. Brian's Xmas Rage made me laugh. Enjoy Steve Gapp's words on wisdom. For all the surfing fans, our oceangybe.com guys are in Tahiti.

So, who's going to the Seattle Regional Gathering, next month on President's Day weekend? Registration is still open, and how about Quebec's AG in June?

I love hearing from you. Please forward submissions to editor@lumens.ca or write to *Lumens* with any brainstorm, comments or ideas. And take a minute to kiss someone. Happy Valentine's, Lovers.

*Looking forward to hearing from you,
Lisa*



Here's another fine mess you've gotten me into...



Ole's Car Accident

Ole had a car accident. In court, the trucking company's lawyer questioned Ole. "Didn't you say 'I'm fine' at the scene of the accident?"

Ole responded, "Vell, I'll tell you vat happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule, Bessie, into the..."

"I didn't ask for any details", the lawyer interrupted. "Just answer the question. Did you not say 'I'm fine' at the scene of the accident?"

Ole said, "Vell, I had just got Bessie into the trailer and I vas-driving down the road..."

The lawyer interrupted again and said, "Judge, I am trying to establish the fact that, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question."

Letter to the Editor

Hi !

I am the local secretary for Québec City and I read with interest your article on Red Nose which you conclude by saying "only in Canada, eh? Pity." Let me offer you a little additional information.

Opération "Nez Rouge" was founded by Jean-Marie De Koninck, a university professor, in 1984. It spread across the province of Québec first then to the other provinces. In the 1990s it was also implanted in Switzerland, France and maybe some other places. I don't know if it's still working in Europe though. For more info check their site : <http://www.operationnezrouge.com/fr/cont.asp>.

Hope to see you in Québec for our AG2008 next June.

Serge Desrosiers

Annual General Meeting and Potluck

This year's AGM will be held at Sheila Gair's house (14372 Ridge Crescent, Surrey) on March 1st at four in the afternoon. All members are invited. You must have paid your dues to vote or run for office.

Join us for the Potluck following the AGM.

*"But if a man comes to the door of poetry
untouched by the madness of the Muses,
believing that technique alone will make him a good poet,
he and his sane companions never reach perfection,
but are utterly eclipsed by the performances
of the inspired madman."*

Plato, Phaedrus 245

That's a good idea, Ollie, tell me that again...

By this time, the Judge was fairly interested in Ole's answer and said to the lawyer, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favorite mule, Bessie".

Ole thanked the Judge and proceeded. "Vell as I vas saying, I had just loaded Bessie, my favorite mule, into the trailer and vas driving her down the highway ven this huge semi-truck and trailer ran the stop sign and smacked my truck right in the side."

"I vas thrown into one ditch and Bessie vas thrown into the other. I vas hurting, real bad and didn't vant to move, however, I could hear Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she vas in terrible shape just by her groans.

Shortly after the accident a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning so he vent over to her.

After he looked at her, and saw her fatal condition, he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Den the Patrolman came across the road, gun still in hand, looked at me and said, "How are you feeling?"

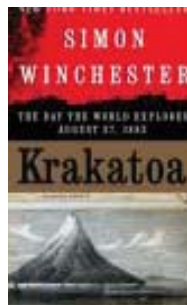
"Now vat the HELL would you say?" ☹



Book Review: Krakatoa

by Elizabeth McVicar

On August 27, 1883, Krakatoa exploded with a force estimated at 24 times the force of Mt. Saint Helen's 1980 eruption and



ten times the force of the A.D. 79 eruption of Vesuvius. The explosion was heard 2,968 miles away. The sudden burst of air pressure caused by the explosion travelled around the world as a shock wave that was recorded by barographs all over the world. This atmospheric shock wave was recorded at Greenwich seven times over two weeks before its intensity weakened to the point where it could no longer be detected.

In *Krakatoa*, which was written a couple of years before the 2004 tsunami, author Simon Winchester starts by explaining the geology of the area. I found this quite interesting. I remember hearing, in the sixties, about plate tectonics and how the continents were drifting. I was just a child at the time, and didn't realize until I read this book that the reason I was hearing about it back then was that it was cutting edge research at the time.

Winchester also describes the flora and fauna of the region. It is unfortunate that no biologists had had a chance to do an extensive inventory of life on the island of which Krakatoa was a major part, because that meant that there was no benchmark by which to measure the return of life following the

explosion. Mind you, the island is extremely dangerous, due to frequent eruptions, so there is a limit to the scientific studies that can be performed.

We also learn about the history of the area and the social and political conditions at the time. Winchester places this within the global context. He points out that the eruption of Krakatoa was the first major disaster to occur after the telegraph put far flung regions of the earth in touch with one another.

In May 1883, Krakatoa started to rumble and, toward the end of the month, there was a strong eruption. After that, it seemed to be reasonably calm for three months. When Krakatoa exploded in August, the mountain and most of the island of which it was a part disappeared. The explosion and the resultant tsunami killed thousands and destroyed coastal towns and villages.

Winchester makes the case that the social disruption caused by this catastrophe, and the West's response to the catastrophe, gave rise to militant and anti-Western Islamic movements. Therefore, he argues, we are experiencing the repercussions of the eruption

of Krakatoa today at the site of the World Trade Center and in Afghanistan.

After bubbling and boiling for many years, the mountain reappeared above the waves on January 26, 1928. It was soon washed away. "Anak" Krakatoa, or "Son of" Krakatoa, became a permanent feature on sea charts in August 1930. The island of Anak Krakatoa grows steadily at a rate of five inches every week.

Simon Winchester is a journalist and prolific author who has tackled a variety of topics. I tend to take everything he writes with a grain or two of salt, because his expertise is in journalism and not necessarily in the subject of the book. In this case, however, he actually has a degree in geology.

I enjoyed the book and found it very informative. I was disappointed, however, in the quality of the maps. For example, he frequently mentioned the community of Anjer, but it was impossible to find a map that showed Anjer, so I have only a foggy idea of where it was relative to Krakatoa. Also—and I voiced a similar complaint when reviewing Winchester's *The Meaning of Everything*—Winchester has the unfortunate habit of writing lengthy and convoluted sentences—with many inserted comments (sometimes nested, or with footnotes*), which I find annoying—that are difficult to follow.

*That are frequently irrelevant.☹

Merry Xmas Rage

by Brian Hollington



I am rather like Gwendolen in *The Importance of Being Earnest* when she announces: “I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature”. Well, I am. Ask anybody. No, not her, or him. Look, just take my word for it, OK? But, like Gwendolen, I can be pushed too far.

My computer had begun warning me (a month prematurely) that my subscription for Norton Symantec’s virus protection was about to run out. No problem. Hit Renew; follow the bouncing ball, all done. E-mail appeared in my Inbox, confirming the renewal and the charge to my credit card. And another air message appeared to warn me that my subscription was about to run out. Back to the Website; ah, you need to verify. Click on the verify button, little bar graph appears, turns green to the middle and stops forever. Repeat four times. Look for the Customer Service site, also known as the FOAD site (ask any teenager). Trouble downloading? You just need to verify. I don’t think so.

Go trolling through Symantec’s sites and finally find one that offers

telephone contact. OK, you have to send them an E-mail, and, if in the mood, they will send you a number. Finally get a number and a real person. He is very good indeed. By now all I wanted was to reverse that invoice and get the hell away from Symantec. He apologized, reversed the charge and left me, if not mollified, at least in a reasonable state of mind. Then I get another E-Mail about my “request” for a refund. I have to go to a special “Letter of Destruction” address to confirm the refund. The address has 96 characters! There is a warning that the link might not work and I might have to enter the address manually (these idiots are computer experts?) Fortunately it works. It is rather a pity that the better mood is largely dispersed by the warning that if Symantec should find that I am still using the undownloadable product, I could face a \$100,000 fine and/or jail. Oh please!

Next comes a survey form. Am I satisfied with the service? I give my live contact credit for his help and mark everything else as abominable. They also offer a spot to air my grievance (always nice to take it out and waggle it). I set out the reason for me discontent and hit Send. Within five minutes I have

an answer: “This site no longer accepts E-mail”. Computer warns me that my Symantec subscription is about to run out. Get into Control Panel and rip out anything with Norton on it. Takes about twenty minutes. No more air messages.

Today I get another invoice. Symantec have automatically renewed my subscription again. Apparently the original user’s agreement gives them the right to do this. I ring CIBC, the credit card company. They cannot reverse the bill since I agreed to it in the first place. I go through four different departments. All are quick to reply and sympathetic. One man says that I have been mugged. Cancel the card to get You-Know-Who out of my life. Guy who sets me up with a new card starts me off with a credit to offset a bad experience. So, CIBC pays for Symantec’s lousy business practices.

Lesson: if you paid for Norton’s with a credit card, change it. Their agreement binds you to them for the life of that card. Get rid of it. Control panel will do away with those irritating reminders. Substitute? Try AVG. It is Czech and free. Kudos to CIBC, who were very helpful especially as their client was on the far rim of apoplexy. I hope Santa drops a hundredweight of coal right on Mr. Norton’s genitalia. ☹



Romp and Circumstance

by Virginia Story

Romp, stomp, circumnavigate, and circumlocute, but never circumspect or circumvent Seattle's Regional Gathering. Join us, this year. We return to the Best Western Executive Inn (completely non-smoking) in downtown Seattle. An easy 1 1/2 blocks from the Seattle Center, Space Needle, Science Fiction Museum, and Experience Music Project. Call 1-800-351-3444 or 206-448-9444 to reserve your room.

Registration: frozen at \$75 and \$80 at the door. For more information and registration forms: www.mensaww.org/gather.htm Contact Mary Prior with questions and to volunteer: yeomama@msn.com. ☺

Choose from the following menu of rare and scintillating events.

How I Broke the Law in Intellectual Property. Everett Freuhling, a local Mensan and attorney who deals primarily with trademarks and domain names, and is conversant with Internet law issues.

Bach to Einstein and Beyond. Professor Vladi Chaloupka links physics and music in a musico-logical setting. After a career in experimental elementary particle physics, he is merging his life experience with his three passions: science, music, and human affairs. At UW, Dr. Chaloupka is Professor of Physics, Adjunct Professor at the School of Music, and Adjunct Professor at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.

Salon Emeraude Burlesque. Seattle's premier burlesque and cabaret performing group, specializes in burlesque and vaudeville traditions. More than just glitz and glamour, it is burlesque in the spirit of classic vaudeville with a modern day edge. May include acrobats, aerialists, animal acts, clowns, live music, skits, comedy, and magic. ADULTS ONLY!

Esperanto Saluton! Brian McCullough, Esperanto Speaker and Expert, discusses the social climate in which Esperanto came into being, how the movement has worked to help non Esperantists, and real world benefits of Esperanto.

Book Sale. Silent book sale to raise money for our local scholarship program on Saturday only.

Seattle's 2008 RG President's Day Wkend February 15-17, 2008

Tours. Science Fiction Museum led by its original director, Donna Shirley. Friday, February 15, 2008, at 1:00 pm (Meet at the museum at 12:45 pm) and Sunday, February 17, 2008, at 1:30 pm an amphibious tour of Seattle (yes, land and water) in an old WW II landing craft. The cost of the Science Fiction tour includes the "connected" Experience Music Project (EMP), but you can do that at your own pace and time, if you do it the same day (Friday).

Naturopathic Physician Serena McKenzie of Bastyr University. Her mission: Empower others to be fully alive. She combines clinical science with the art of medicine to deliver holistic and integrative care for the body and beyond. Her goal is to evoke life-enhancing changes that nurture extraordinary health. Bastyr University provides natural health education, research, and health care for the greater community.

How to Exorcize Your Computer. Donna Prior discusses how to keep your computer clean and free from spyware, viruses, and adware. Specially designed for non computer literate folks. Added bonus: what you need to know about contacting tech support.

Canadian Aboriginal Women and Storywork. Donna Hill presents her Master's thesis, demonstrating a culturally respectful platform for some urban Aboriginal women to voice their stories about being Indigenous women living with HIV/AIDS.

Region 8 Spelling Bee. Ed Lucas will emcee the right to claim the Region 8 Spelling Bee Championship! Ed comes up with some wild and often unknown words. Always interesting and fun to watch. MWW has had several spelling bees over the past few years. Never fails to amuse, entertain, and certainly add to one's vocabulary!

Everything You Wanted to Know About Guide Dogs but Were Afraid to Ask! Claire Anderson, new to MWW, talks about her experience in becoming blind and getting a guide dog. Special Guest in attendance.

New Members Lunch. Hosted by MWW and free to registered new members (yes, that's the hitch!) (a coupon will be in new members' registration packages). Opened up to all members who want to join us and meet and greet the new members, if they are willing to pay for their lunch.

Pre Banquet Piano Music. By Marsha Wright (classical, of course, and probably Bach!) MWW's resident ivory tickler.

More Games. Phil Lacefield, Jr, will discuss game design and demonstrate new games on Friday and Saturday, then play them with those interested. ☺

228 for Guilty, 220 for Innocent

by Steve Gapp

*Six essential qualities are the key to success:
Sincerity, personal integrity, humility,
courtesy, wisdom, charity.*

William Menninger

So, Bill, I see you omitted intelligence and included wisdom. Why?

Here are some quotes to ponder from Paul Graham:

- “Wise” and “smart” are both ways of saying someone knows what to do. The difference is that “wise” means one has a high average outcome across all situations, and “smart” means one does spectacularly well in a few.

- As knowledge gets more specialized... intelligence and wisdom drift apart, [and] we may have to decide which we prefer. We may not be able to optimize for both simultaneously.

- as knowledge has grown more specialized, there are more and more types of work in which people have to make up new things, and in which performance is therefore unbounded. Intelligence has become increasingly important relative to wisdom because there is more room for spikes.

- Wisdom seems to come largely from curing childish qualities, and intelli-

gence largely from cultivating them.

- cultivating intelligence seems to be a matter of identifying some bias in one’s character—some tendency to be interested in certain types of things—and nurturing it. Instead of obliterating your idiosyncrasies in an effort to make yourself a neutral vessel for the truth, you select one and try to grow it from a seedling into a tree.

- perhaps one reason schools work badly is that they’re trying to make intelligence using recipes for wisdom. Most recipes for wisdom have an element of subjection. At the very least, you’re supposed to do what the teacher says. The more extreme recipes aim to break down your individuality the way basic training does. But that’s not the route to intelligence. Whereas wisdom comes through humility, it may actually help, in cultivating intelligence, to have a mistakenly high opinion of your abilities.

It is not my intent to disparage intelligence; I was simply spending some time

earlier today trying to better understand the difference between intelligence and wisdom. I had fun doing so, and so can you. Have a go at this 39-question wisdom test, if you dare: www.nytimes.com/ref/magazine/20070430_WISDOM.html

Learn more about the theory with these two links:

<http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/ardelt/> click fifth bullet under “Selected Publications,” Empirical Assessment.

<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/ardelt/> then click the fourth bullet under “Selected Publications,” A Reply...

For a description of the book “A Handbook of Wisdom: Psychological Perspectives” (Sternberg 2005), google “a handbook of wisdom,” select the Cambridge University Press link, then click “frontmatter.”

Lastly, a link to more “wisdom” quotes than you’ll ever need, and a relevant entry in Wikipedia:


www.wisdomquotes.com

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wisdom> 

Games at Seattle’s RG: February 15-17, 2008

Region 8 Texas Hold ‘Em Tournament. 7 pm Friday evening You must sign up at registration to participate. Your chips, etc., will be provided at the tournament. If you wish, you may also throw \$10 in a pot (at the registration desk) and play to win the pot at the conclusion of the tournament. The pot will be divided among the top 3 winners from those who ante up. This is separate from the tournament itself, for which no money is required. I believe a trophy will be provided.

Pirates of the Burning Sea. Flying Lab Software, a Seattle based game development company, maker of the critically acclaimed Rails Across America. Their current project is Pirates of the Burning Sea, an innovative massively multiplayer online role playing game of adventure, history, and naval combat in the age of sail.

Can’t Get Enough Trivia? Trivial and Fun Pursuits. Tom Brown and Rosann O’Reilly host three sessions of Trivia contests throughout the weekend. Topics run the gamut from dead serious to very silly, so come prepared to be challenged. 

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