



Lumens

BC Islands Mensa, Mountain Mensa, Vancouver Mensa & Yukon Mensa

Mensa Canada's Western
Region Newsletter

June / July 2009 Vol 12, Issue 3

Regional Rep Rap

by Dave Stubbs



On March 21, the Vancouver Mensa group (which actually includes everyone from Horseshoe Bay to Hope) held its annual meeting at Locsec Sheila Gair's residence. As expected, the turnout was barely into double digits and all of the executive members were re-elected/appointed by acclamation. The treasurer reported that we had several thousand dollars in the bank, a revelation that led us into a discussion as to how we might possibly use some of this money to further activities within the group. If you have any ideas along this line, please feel free to contact Sheila.

As mentioned in the previous issue of Lumens, the Mensa Canada Annual Gathering is taking place on the University of Carlton campus in Ottawa over the July 10-12 weekend. Once again, I would encourage you to seriously consider joining Mensans from Canada, the U.S., and elsewhere in the world as they gather in our nation's capital to socialize, exchange ideas, visit local attractions, and generally have a really good time. Accommodations for this event are in the student residences, at reasonable rates, and rooms are available for an extended period of time both before and after the AG. For complete details on the AG, visit the Mensa Ottawa website at www.mensa-ottawa.org.

As of the end of April, Mensa membership stood at 284, an increase of 49 from the end of February. ☺



*Untitled,
Kaethe Batdorf*

New Mensa Members

Did you know, new members are eligible for a \$50 prize for attending their first regional gathering?
If you are a bona fide Mensa member here in BC and this would be your FIRST visit to a regional gathering, contact Sheila Gair to claim \$50 towards the registration fee.

Inside This Issue

Regional Rep Rap.....	1
Editor's Letter.....	2
Vancouver Mensa Nexus	3
BeavRG XII.....	4
Gorilla.....	5
Everyone Wants	6
Obituary	7

Editor's Letter

by Lisa Le Blanc



Well, June is the month that most brides pick for weddings and we have a doozy coming up. My own beautiful son's wedding was to be in Tulum, Mexico but thanks to the Swine flu - off to a Caribbean beach instead. Ah, crystal clear water, flurries of fishes and white sand beaches. Young love is the best of all there is. So to lovely couples everywhere: Congratulations and long live love.

On a more mensan note, don't miss out on the new offer of \$50 towards attendance at a new Mensan's first gathering. We all know how much fun they can be. Check out page 4 for Mary Prior's latest account of Oregon's Regional Gathering which was held in Washington, of course.

I'm very sad to announce the passing of our former LocSec, Kathe. Her announcement is on page 7 and describes a vivacious woman who will be sorely missed. Please enjoy her beautiful art which is featured in this issue.

We have more news. Lumens will be expanding by two pages! That means so much more room for offerings from you good people. Time to dust off your fountain pen and finally get that thought sorted out on paper. We're looking for jokes, puzzles, quotes, quirks, rants, raves and any other random thoughts worth discussing. Please forward any submissions to: editor@lumens.ca or write to *Lumens* with any brainstorm or ideas.

*Looking forward to hearing from you,
Lisa*



Jesse & Lina

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



I know this is the hmour section, but we are serious about this offer. If you are new to Mensa and heading to your first gathering, contact Loc Sec Sheila Gair/ Treasurer Martin Ramshaw with details and we will give you \$50 towards your registration fee. A photocopy of your registration form and cheque would be required either before or after the event. ☺



Vancouver Mensa Nexus

by Ted Powell

At the Vancouver Mensa annual general meeting in March we discussed ways of organizing get-togethers on a timeframe shorter than the two-month newsletter cycle. The idea of using a commercial service did not get strong support, mainly for privacy reasons. After extracting promises of assistance from a couple of the members present, I volunteered to locate software suitable for our purposes and bring the long-dormant Vancouver Mensa web site back to life.

The new incarnation is at <http://van-mensa.psg.com> and is named Vancouver Mensa Nexus, a nexus being a "connection, interconnection, tie, link." Membership in the site is limited to Mensa members and close associates.

With the exception of a few information pages intended for public viewing, site content is only visible to registered members of the site. The only personal information required to be a member of the site is one's first & last name and email address, and the latter is not generally visible to (non-admin) members.

We don't expect the growth of site content to be so rapid as to inspire people to check it out every day, so the site has an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) web feed. This facility is non-intrusive and is under the control of the individual user, who can turn it on or off at any time. The feed content will provide just enough information about new content to let subscribers decide whether to log in and read more, without revealing personal information.

Besides providing for impromptu event organization, the trigger for this effort, the site offers some other services. There is a page for all the regularly-scheduled Vancouver events, for out-of-town Mensa members planning to visit Vancouver and locals who have mislaid their newsletter. This includes links to Google Maps for location and route planning, and in some cases additional information provided by event hosts.

There will be information on upcoming Regional and Annual Gatherings. The Media Gallery already contains photos from recent gatherings in Vancouver, Portland, and Edmonton.

Looking for Israel Zelachowski

I'm a past member, looking for assistance. You might remember me from games nights a few years ago when Barbara Barker was still in town and hosting Saturday get togethers in White Rock.

I am trying to get a hold of Isreal Zelachowski. Members who might still see him are Dr. J Verster, Ozzie Sylvester or Cindy Newton.

If you can you help, please contact: me at 604 876-5238 or dickhughes@shaw.ca

Thanks, Dick

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

Calgary Regional Gathering

Mensa Calgary will be hosting a Regional Gathering in beautiful Banff, Alberta on September 11-13th. We would love to have you join us. We have negotiated an exceptional rate of \$199 per night at the luxury Banff Springs Hotel and we have put together a great program including more than a dozen speakers. Please visit our website at www.mensabanffrg.com.

Patricia Almost, almostp@shaw.ca 403 212 1461
Mensa Calgary LocSec/Events Coordinator



BeavRG XII

by Mary Prior, Western Washington

On May 1, three of us drove to the Red Lion on the Quay in Vancouver, WA, site of Oregon Mensa's 12th Regional Gathering. This was one of the best RGs Oregon Mensa has done.

I introduced two speakers who I really wanted to meet. That's one advantage about volunteering to be a speaker shepherd—you actually get some quiet time to talk with the speakers before their presentation. Win-Win!

First was Ilana Sol, a Portland filmmaker who discussed her documentary "On Paper Wings," about the people affected by a Japanese paper balloon bomb that fell in Oregon and claimed the lives of the only people killed on the continental U.S. as a result of enemy action during WWII. It was an amazing effort by Japan to engulf the entire Pacific Northwest in forest fires.

The other speaker was Joan Smith, who talked about beading history, types of beads, and showed each of us the basics of working with beads. I was particularly impressed by a mother-son duo who made beautiful pieces of jewelry. It was very well attended, with a dozen people who crowded elbow-to-elbow around the table piled high with beads and other accoutrements.

I also got to the presentation by Dave Dahl, an ex-felon and self-described "four time loser" who is now a successful businessman and founder of Dave's Killer Bread, and who is dedicated to baking the highest quality, best tasting organic bread possible. Dave even donated bread to hospitality for our sandwiches—and it was soooooo tasty!

I had a conflict, but I also wanted to go to Senior Sex: Q & A, by Daniel Laury, MD, a geriatric gynecologist from Medford. (No, I didn't



Untitled, Kaethe Batdorf

know that specialty existed.) He has also written a book, *Senior Sex: Answers to Your Questions...* I did get lucky, though, and he auctioned off a copy of the book at the Scholarship Auction, but I was outbid. The folks, knowing how interested I was and the desert I've lived in these last few years, took pity on me, and many folks (thank you, Velma Jeremiah, Fran Doyle, Diana Powell, and the rest of you) contributed \$10 here, \$5 there, with the proviso that the book go home with me. Daniel was nice enough to autograph it for me, saying (at my suggestion, of course), "Thanks, I had a great time. We'll have to do it again sometime."

Oregon Mensa also had a marvelous cadre of young Mensans who spent the weekend in the lobby, singing, dancing, playing instruments, and telling jokes, and all to raise money for the scholarship fund. OM raised more than \$3,000 between the silent auction, book sales, live auction, and the actions of these young Ms who aren't even yet eligible for scholarships. Way to go!

This is the first RG in Portland in years that I saw people getting up and dancing. The live music was a lot of fun, and many of us sang, others danced, and we all just had a great time! Velma, I have movies of you, Ruth Ballard, and Virginia Story shaking your booties!

Wendy Hutchison said: I am so glad I went! As usual, I participated mostly in Hospitality and

Games. To see people I haven't seen in a while, to catch up with friends from Portland, Northern California, Canada, to meet new friends, some from right here in the Seattle area, and to play Quiddler, that's an RG to me!

A late-night luau Saturday night, complete with leis, a big container of Blue Hawaii drinks (pineapple juice, coconut rum, and Blue Curacao liqueur - wow!), and authentic South Pacific foods. Karaoke in one of the Hospitality rooms attracted a crowd ranging up to about twenty people, who really had fun singing and laughing along with a wide variety of tunes.

Ruth Ballard: So many good things about the RG this year. The hospitality room was overflowing with goodies (yes I gained two pounds!). The friendly approach to Quiddler was fun and I got to the finals "with a little help from my friends"; More talks than I could attend because they were scheduled at the same time. Of course the Saturday night live music was great and the dancing Mensan Women had a blast - Velma put the rest of us to shame with her energy and stamina.

As usual, we greeted old friends, met new ones, and found things that touch us physically (yoga and great food), mentally (stimulation of new ideas and some awesome speakers), and spiritually—only in Mensa can I renew heart-friendships and get my daily requirement of vitamin HUGS!

Gorilla

by Brian Hollington



I have always been a keen collector of the shaggy dog story. This one, as sharp-eyed readers may have noticed, is about a gorilla.

The scene is a pub in a small English market town at noon. The barman is busy setting up some optics at the back of the bar when a deep voice behind him says “arf o’ bitter, please.” Turning to face his customer he is astonished to find a rather dusty gorilla, dressed in a tool belt and a yellow hard hat. Not surprisingly he simply stands and gapes. The gorilla becomes rather testy. “Ere, John. Don’t ‘ang about. I only get ‘arf hour for lunch.” I should explain that the English working classes habitually address unfamiliar males as John, rather in the manner that Americans may call you Bud.

“Right, right” said the barman (whose name, unfortunately, happened to be Horace) and quickly pulled up the required half. “Luvly” purred his customer, burying his muzzle in the foam. And then: “Do you do sandwiches in ‘ere?”

“I can do you ham, ham and cheese, ham-tomato-and cheese, ham and tomato,” began Horace. But the gorilla stopped him. “Ham and Mustard” he said. “I’ll sit over there and p’raps you

can bring it over when it’s ready.” While he was preparing the gorilla’s sandwich Horace thought: “He probably thought I was a bit rude, staring at him like that”. So, when he took the sandwich over to the table he apologised. “That’s all right. I get that a lot. But, like I said, I only get ‘arf an hour for lunch. So, if you could ‘ave arf o’ bitter and an ‘am sandwich ‘ere ready, that’d be lovely.”

You might think that a gorilla would be an uncomfortable guest to have around, but you would be wrong. As any watcher of BBC documentaries knows, gorillas are peaceful creatures and tend to have quiet around them. Who wants to start a fight with 400lbs of silverback in the room? Horace even put a reserved sign on the gorilla’s table.

Then one day a circus came to town. The ringmaster popped into the pub for a quick one and the subject of the pub’s unusual customer happened to come up in conversation. “A talking gorilla? I’ve never heard of such a thing! Would you introduce me to him?” “You’re not going to exploit him or nothing?” asked Horace, feeling quite protective. “No, no. I might be able to do him a bit of good.” When the gorilla arrived for his lunch, Horace made the introductions.

After some chat, a little disjoined

because the gorilla was getting outside his sandwich, the ringmaster asked: “Are you happy with your job?” A shadow crossed the massive face. “Foreman’s a bit of a bastard, but then they always are. The job’ll be over in a month so it don’t really matter.”

The ringmaster leaned forward. “Whatever you get now, I’ll give you four times as much to work for me.”

“Well now, that’s a very ‘andsome offer. But I’ve got a few questions. You people perform in a tent don’t you?”

“We do. The bigger outfits rent an arena. That’s very expensive. Plus you need two acts going at the same time, except for the lion tamer and the elephants, to keep the crowd’s attention. Then we like the tradition of the Big Top. Circus people are big on tradition.”

“Do you still live in caravans?” asked the gorilla.

“Well, it’s a motor home or a trailer these days. But, like the tent, it’s a link with our past and it saves on hotels. They’re very comfortable.”

“I’m sure they are. I’m sure they are” said the gorilla. Then he took off the hard hat and scratched his head, producing a sound like an Irishman sandpapering a zinc bucket. “I still don’t get it. Why would you people need a drywaller?”

Young Men’s Adventure Weekend July 10 , 11, 12 2009

The Young Men’s Adventure Weekend is on again. A chance for men and boys to get together in the wilderness to do what men do. An adventure for all men and all boys (Mensan or not) and affordable for all.

Contact Brad Leslie at 604-263-2823 for more info or check out the website: www.ymaw.com

The Young Men’s Adventure Weekend has been mentioned in a new book called “The Purpose of Boys: Helping Our Sons Find Meaning, Significance and Direction in their Lives” by Michael Gurian. He is one of the leading proponents of the mechanical, biological differences between males and females and how this affects their development and learning patterns and a whole bunch more stuff, leading to how to educate and mentor them differently.

It’s kinda like the theoretical underpinnings of the work we have been doing for the last 20 years / millenia. Michael Gurian is frequently on the New York Times best seller list and talk shows such as Oprah, as the advocate / poster boy for the development of young men.

Everyone Wants to Be Like Me

by Don Graham

...if only they had the courage to admit it and actually *do* something about it.

Yeah, well maybe.

Who makes statements like this? Usually they are in fact highly successful in a limited materialistic kind of way – lots of money, nice cars, houses, and toys. Those who conduct expensive seminars on *How to Be Like Me* are often aficionados of what someone once aptly described as the “silly art” of power dressing, although they will typically dress in whatever manner they think will most influence those in their audience. They think of life as a zero-sum game, meaning that the only way to win is to have someone else lose. They are often extreme Type A personalities, and sometimes even borderline or full-blown sociopaths or psychopaths. And how could they know what anyone else really wants, anyway? Their hunger for power deludes them into imagining that we who have no such desire beyond having some control over our own lives are the ones deluding ourselves.

Popular culture gives the impression that psychopaths are enraged homicidal maniacs, but these are the exceptions. One of the main characteristics of psychopaths is their complete lack of empathy – they cannot *begin* to imagine how it would feel to be otherwise than *they* are. But they are keen empirical observers of behaviour, and are often skilled actors able to adopt whatever persona suits their current purpose. If they want something from you, they may act as the nicest people you could ever hope to meet, and based on your reactions, keep fine-tuning their behaviour to whatever seems to work with you – Hamlet’s “smiling damned villain.” But depending on how good

they are at it, something may not *feel* right – maybe they flatter you or laugh a little too much at your not-very-funny joke – and you come away with an uneasy feeling that you have somehow been cheated out of something without being sure what. This is because their behaviour is calculated, not spontaneous, so it doesn’t quite ring true. If they are *really* good at it, you can’t help *liking* the buggers. (Some non-psychopaths try to influence others by adopting what they *think* is a charming persona, but suck at it, and end up fooling nobody but themselves.) In other situations, psychopaths may act hostile, intimidating, or aggressive – whatever works – and be completely at ease with themselves while doing it, because lying and deception are as natural to them as breathing. Other people’s opinions are of no consequence to them, as long as they get what they want.

Well, I imagine that many of us would in fact like to have the money, cars, houses, and toys such people have, but what would we have to give up to get them? Our basic humanity, that’s what, and when you take that into consideration, having all these nice things doesn’t seem such a bargain after all. “What shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”

I don’t mean to suggest that all rich, successful people are soulless psychopaths. If their success came from organizing the production of things or providing services to improve our lives, and by doing so honestly and better than their competitors, then all power to them. As Ayn Rand pointed out, these are the people who *create* wealth, as opposed to merely *getting* it.

This reminds me of that curious reversed-value expression *nouveau riche*, intended by *old money* as derogatory, for people who acquired their wealth by their own talent and effort, as opposed to having merely inherited it.

The zero-sum game types are social Darwinists, to whom competition is the fundamental rule of life. But they fail to realize that although competition is essential to progress, real Darwinism also explains the origins and value of cooperation. Any society – human or otherwise – will evolve both in a dynamic balance that optimizes the overall likelihood for the society as a whole to thrive. Cooperation, in those for whom it is the fundamental rule, is just as deeply rooted as is competition for the others we have been discussing. Most of us have some elements of each. A healthy balance is what we need. Totalitarian societies are so far out of balance that when they do break, it is likely to be through a sudden violent revolution that is the political equivalent of an earthquake. Some form of democracy, even if poorly managed and the electorate isn’t very smart, provides a means for periodic adjustments in such a way as to attenuate the stresses of change. In materials science, this is called *annealing*: to make a substance less brittle, you heat it slowly until it begins to soften, leave it for a while to let the stresses even out, then cool it gradually. Periodic *annealing* through free elections is how we keep societies healthy – not stress-free, which is an unattainable ideal – but with different special-interest groups in reasonable balance, so that nobody gets everything they want, but everybody gets something.

Obituary: Kaethe Batdorf

I'm very sorry to inform you of the passing of our former LocSec, Kaethe Batdorf. Following is her obituary. An exhibit of her artwork is at www.pearsonresidents.bc.ca/id19.htm

Passed away in the Vancouver General Hospital, from the ravaging disease of Multiple Sclerosis at age 55. Kaethe was born in Lunenburg, lived in various Nova Scotia communities with her parents Luke and Thaya (deceased); and her older brother Saren (Sivakatirswami) Hawaii; sisters, Carelle (Dwyer), Keene, N.H.; and Erika Batdorf-von Baeyer, Toronto.

After her high school days, and a prolonged Grand European Tour, Kaethe moved to Vancouver to be with her brother Saren. She continued to live there for the rest of her days. Kaethe was an active member of The Vancouver Chapter of the Mensa Society until she was hospitalized in the George Pearson Centre in Vancouver that attends to Multiple Sclerosis.

Prior to that Kaethe worked as a tax consultant in an international accounting firm, then as manager of the controller department of a business. The onslaught of MS was sudden and aggressive, and Kaethe became a full-time resident of George Pearson Hospital until her death on May 15, 2009.

Kaethe was assertive, dynamic and a powerful single woman. She maintained a high passion for painting, weaving, music, and the environment. She managed to acquire further training in Analytical Clinical Sciences Pollution Services from the B.C. Institute of Technology in 1988, and was proud of her achievement of receiving an award for inventing an acid mining drainage control system.

Yet her primary passion was painting and weaving, and she continued to paint until there was no ability to control her hands. Kaethe developed a web site and maintained it with her 1989 Brilliant North Star Manifesto; a philosophy of environmental and lov-

ing care for nature. This Manifesto motivated and sustained her for more than 10 years of intense disability.

Kaethe made George Pearson Centre her community, and she, along with her ever twice-weekly visiting friend Alain, and some Mensa members, had a powerful personal impact on all her fellow sufferers, medical staff and caregivers. Kaethe developed what she called a scientist's faith of pure rationality, with mass being matter turned into eternal energy. She is now one of the energies of the stars.

A celebratory ritual was held in The George Pearson Centre on May 28, at 2:15 p.m. A later celebratory event will be held in Nova Scotia, when her ashes are returned to Luke and her sisters. This will be by invitation only.

Those desiring to honor her may wish to contribute to Research for M.S. through the MS Society, or to The George Pearson Centre Hospital, 700 W. 57th Ave. Vancouver, BC V6P 3X4.



The Source
Kaethe Batdorf

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Contributions are welcomed on a first North American serial rights basis and may be submitted as hard copy, diskette or email. Submissions deadline is the 10th of the previous month. Copy may be condensed for space limitations or edited for legal or ethical reasons and any submissions or advertising may be declined for similar cause. © allkeyedin 2006

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