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## Turnabout is Fair Play

by Tom Zavist

“According to sources within the German Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst - BND*), the Bush administration has drawn up plans to hit Iran's nuclear, other WMD, and military sites with heavy saturation bombing using bunker buster bombs and tactical nuclear weapons. . . . The German intelligence comes from classified briefings provided by elements within the CIA that are concerned the necons in the Bush administration will, in attacking Iran, set off a chain of events that will lead to world war. . . . The Bush war plans for Iran also entail quickly seizing Iran's southwestern Khuzestan Province, where most of Iran's oil reserves and refineries are located. . . . The Bush plans call for a U.S. military strike across the Iraqi border and from naval forces in the Persian Gulf in answer to an appeal for assistance from the Al Ahwaz Popular Democratic Front and Liberation Organization rebel forces in Khuzestan, which will declare an independent Arab state of the Democratic Republic of Ahwaz and receive diplomatic recognition from the United States and a few close U.S. allies. . . . There are also plans to incite rebellions among Iran's other minorities, including Azeris and Turkmenis in the oil-rich Caspian Sea region.”\*

Those who fear that a nuclear attack by the Bush administration against Iran may provoke a world war have a legitimate concern. China and Russia may take exception to such a nuclear attack and the subsequent dismemberment of Iran into separate countries. Who knows what they may do in response? While the mind gravitates to a nuclear retaliation of some sort, our enemies have subtler options at their disposal. China, for example, is owed about a tenth of our foreign debt. China could suddenly dump its holdings of United States Treasury bonds and provoke others to do likewise. A sudden spike in interest rates could prove devastating to our economy.

China and Russia also subscribe to different scientific theories. For example, they do not believe oil is a fossil fuel. They believe that oil exudes from inside the Earth as a strictly geological process—rapidly enough to harden into coal around human fossils and artifacts. Thus, if you dig deep enough, they believe you can find oil anywhere, and it replenishes. By digging deep wells, Russia has made itself into an oil exporter and has helped other countries, such as Viet Nam, to dig deep wells too.

The consensus in the United States, by contrast, is that oil is a fossil fuel that takes eons to replenish. Instead of digging deeper, like Russia, the White House's strategy, therefore, is to control the Middle East militarily as a means to dominate the rest of the world. According to Michael Meacher, a former British cabinet minister, the goal of the United States is “world hegemony, built around securing by force command over the oil supplies.”\*\*

There is as much debt in the United States as in 1929. The country is no longer a net exporter of food. Industry and manufacturing are declining. Real estate is a bubble that has peaked in many places, and the bond market is not far behind. The stock market is overvalued. The economy could collapse into depression even with oil. Without oil, the economy will collapse. President Bush sits where President Hoover once sat. He is desperate. He needs quick victories in the Middle East.

The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were great military successes, but the occupation of Iraq has turned into a quagmire. Our military is stretched to the limit as it is. An invasion of Iran may necessitate conscription.

Conscription will radicalize the younger part of our populace. The viewpoint of the anti-war radicals is different from the mainstream viewpoint. For example, the radicals believe the attacks on the World Trade Center were a covert operation directed by the White House as a pretext to invade Iraq. They believe Republicans cheated in Ohio and Florida in 2004 and that Senator Kerry would have won but for a rigged election. They believe the levee breaks in New Orleans were another covert operation—leading to an ethnic cleansing of a quarter million Blacks to make way for casinos on inexpensive land to be bought by eminent domain.

Either conscription or economic collapse means Democratic majorities in Congress after 2006 and Senator Clinton in the White House after 2008. If Republicans start a war in Iran before the Democrats come to power, however, the pro-Israel lobby will make sure that Democrats stay the course. Anti-war radicals who quit the Democratic Party will never become Republicans. Patriots who support the war will prefer the incumbent Democrats to the radicals to the left of the Democrats, which will spell the end of the Republican Party. While the country has a two party system, it has not always been the same two parties. Today, even without a draft and a depression, one voter in three is disenchanted with both major parties.

(Continued to P.2, Turnabout)

### A Blurp

by Sonia Johnson

The deadline to nominate candidates for the Executive Committee of MENC is upon us. The bylaws stipulate that candidates be nominated by the Mblem's December deadline, which is the sixth. Nominees don't run for any of the six offices in particular; the winners decide among themselves who will hold the various positions. None of the positions are taxing, since most of the work is in exercising judgment. If you feel up to the challenge or know a fellow Mencan who is, please, nominate now.

(Continued from P. 1, Turnabout)

Once the Democrats lead the government and embrace war in the Middle East, the disenchantment will become a new major party to the left of the Democrats, which will push the Democrats from the left to the right, and the Republicans will follow the Whigs and the Federalists into oblivion. Today's anti-war radicals are very anti-Israel. A draft will polarize our society—with the Jews and older White Protestants (who advocate torture and war) to the right within the Democratic Party and everyone else, particularly Blacks, Hispanics and younger Whites, to the left in a new party.

Why are Hispanics important? By 2012, Hispanics will have comfortable majorities in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Hispanics happen to live where much of the oil is. Among states, Alaska is the leading oil producer, followed by Texas, Louisiana and California.

In New Orleans, the poorest hurricane victims have been greeted by troops with orders to shoot to kill. Such is the mainstream model of governance throughout America's empire—from Baghdad to Jefferson Parish. Every year government grows more centralized, corrupt and repressive. Picture the United States in 2016 enduring a long economic depression, exhausted by war in the Middle East, millions of veterans and their families suffering from cancer from uranium weaponry,

a nation in debt to Asia with fuel shortages and sky high oil prices. By 2016, four states—including the two largest—will have Spanish speaking majorities. Rich Texans may favor decentralizing government today, but by 2016 they will favor federal control of everything.

Conscription means political division along generational lines. The older generation loses voters to the hereafter every year, while a new cohort of voters joins the younger generation every year. Political division along linguistic lines favors Spanish in the long run. What will the mainstream do after 2016? Both demographic trends favor the anti-war radicals in the long run. Like corrupt Republicans in 2004, the Democrats can rig an election that turns out 51%-49% by lying and saying it was really 49%-51%. When the polls say 70%-30%, however, the lie rings hollow.

What happens if radicals win? Predictably, radicals will withdraw from the Middle East, let Israel meet its destiny without American support, and focus attention on the oil, land and other wealth in this country and seek to redistribute it. In an ironic twist of fate, the Democratic Party may find itself in the position of the White minority governments of southern Africa.

One day, the pro-Israel lobby and the Democrats will face an election they know they will lose to leftists—if the election were fair. Given a choice between democracy and affluence,

what will the wealthy elites in power choose? If they reject democratic elections and choose affluence instead, the four Spanish-speaking states—Alta California, Arizona, Nuevo México y Tejas—may revolt.

Our enemies know where things are headed in this country. If we break off the oil-rich parts of Iran on the pretext of setting up new countries for ethnic minorities, there is nothing to stop our enemies from facilitating the same process within our own borders, ten or twenty years from now. The Chinese would be delighted to see four states secede as an independent, oil-rich Latin American country. Once the secessions start, however, there is no stopping them. China would be tickled pink to see Alaska secede as an independent nation and can afford to pay the Alaskans enough to divert their oil to make it worth their while. Hawaii would make a nifty get-away for wealthy Chinese as an independent country and a great place for a Chinese or Russian naval base. If the left-leaning Washingtonians and Oregonians could be persuaded to go their separate way, then China and Russia would be safer from attack from the United States, which would have no Pacific coast. Assuming southern Louisiana has not by then subsided

into the Gulf of Mexico, persuading its French speakers to secede would liberate the United States of yet another domestic source of oil, as well as a major port.

Americans are fools to believe oil is a fossil fuel that will soon be exhausted. While stupidity may drive its price into the stratosphere, oil will not disappear from the face of the Earth. The Republican Party is different. Americans are fools to believe the Republican Party is an eternal part of the political landscape. The country was here before the Republican Party came into being, and it will be here after it is gone. Americans are fools to believe nuclear attacks against other countries can lead to prosperity. Americans are also fools to believe that the nation is indivisible, especially under circumstances of diplomatic isolation, military defeat, economic depression, moral corruption and linguistic diversity.

Carving up the Islamic Republic may mean immediate nuclear retaliation. On the other hand, our enemies may bide their time and carve us up one day. The White House has made clear its desire to interfere in Iran. Let us pray that the Evangelical Christian leaders of our government find the wisdom to change the road they are on.

\*This story of August 10, 2005, at the [www.waynemadsenreport.com](http://www.waynemadsenreport.com) website has been copied to other websites, including [http://www.elmandjra.org/WAYNE\\_MADSEN\\_REPORT\\_100805.htm](http://www.elmandjra.org/WAYNE_MADSEN_REPORT_100805.htm).

\*\*This quote has been copied widely on the Internet, including the website [http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/entity.jsp?entity=michael\\_meacher](http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/entity.jsp?entity=michael_meacher).

## Random Patterns

by David Skaar

After the piece I wrote last month for my ongoing Culture Quest hype series, I'm going back to basics this month. Writing a theme piece was interesting, but required research and effort to make the history coherent, and this month I don't have a whole lot of time to devote to this piece (and I'm lazy). I'm going back to what I feel is the heart of Culture Quest, and my strength, random facts.

I could write a theme piece based around December, but I won't do that. I could mention that the name "December" literally

means "tenth month", as it used to be the tenth month of the year. I could talk about the solstice too, but I won't. For example, modern holidays based around the time of the solstice (December 21 or 22) go back to the old rituals based around the shortest day of the year. The days leading up to the solstice got shorter and shorter, the sun getting lower and lower in the sky, and the world was getting darker and colder. Not understanding how the earth's tilt and orbit caused this effect, every year, people were afraid that this would be the year that the sun just kept going farther down the sky, until it went away and didn't come back.

Tensions were always high until the days after the solstice, when it could be confirmed that the sun was going back up, the days were getting longer, and the promise of spring was there to look forward to through the miserable months ahead. Like many other natural events, this became the subject of ritual and superstition, with nervous people trying to figure out how they got the sun to come back last year, and how to get it to come back again this year. Sometimes this might involve a lottery to figure out the person that the sun wants as a sacrifice to come back.

(Continued to P. 3, Random)

## 25<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party at Ed Williams

LG News

by Shiangtai Tuan for Ed Williams

If this is your first year in MENC, you are in for a treat. If you have been in MENC for a while, you know what a treat it is. Well, if you have been in MENC for a while and you still do not know what a treat it is, shame on you.

MENC Christmas party at Ed Williams has been famous for nearly quarter of a century. This is the twenty fifth and it will be held on December 17, the third Saturday of the month. It is undoubtedly MENC's best party of the year every year. Maybe it is because of the quality of food or maybe because it is free, it is definitely the best attended. Who says Mensans do not appreciate eating? I have tasted wonderful ham and turkey there. I don't know where he got those great cheeses. You also find unlimited amount of red, white, rose wines, beer, and soft drinks. He says he expects people to arrive at about 6:30 PM and he suggests you don't eat before hand. He does allow you to bring dessert and he says it is not an obligation. Personally, I trust we can supply a good variety of sweets to match his gourmet food. It would be a social gathering, with no speaker, no program, and no kitty.

Just being in his house is already a treat. He has traveled far and wide. Not like some of the tourists who accumulate "souvenirs", he, with his great taste, has collected art works from all over the world. For in-

stance, I was really surprised when I saw a huge genuine Chinese antique jade Ru-Yi in his house. It is something you only expect to see in a museum. Unfortunately, his house was robbed when he was away in October. Well, he said the thieves did not know the value of jade and many of the art collections are not disturbed. Hope the new alarm system will protect him from now on.

One other thing I remembered about his party is that I was first contacted to run for ExComm there. After talking to some of the ExComm members there, I decided to give it a try to donate my time to a worthy cause – to volunteer in the group I enjoyed, for the friendly people I liked. Yes, to serve in ExComm of MENC has proved not only a privilege but also an enjoyment. Consider this: it really would not take too much of your time and you get to do what you think should be done in serving this group. It is also a good time and place to chat with present and former ExComm members if you have question on what are involved, how much time it might be involved, or any other questions. Well, you never can tell, it might be good for your resume too. So, don't forget to mention to some of the ExComm members if you are interested or if you would suggest someone. This year, since I am not running and one of the present member has left the group, even if all the other members will run, there are still at least two positions need to be filled. So, don't be shy. Ed is the election chairman. You will be at the right place!

Contacts: Ed Williams, see calendar for more info.

Date and time: 2005.12.17.18.30 (i.e., 6:30 PM) till late.

Place and Directions: See back of calendar page.

### More Online (Moron Line?)

Mditor Column

by Shiangtai Tuan

Since I suggested musical chair editorship in last issue of Mblem (November issue), I have received numerous offers. Well, again, I exaggerated a little. So far the number is zero, to be exact. However, being optimistic as I am, I am sure there are some by the end of this month and many more later. See, you still have plenty of chance to be a neditor, oh, sorry, an editor.

Of course, you have seen it. In October, our printer played us a Halloween trick. All upper case letter "J's" and all semicolons were printed as upper case letter "Z's" whenever they were in the Arial font. For instance, Zoe was actually Joe and Zacksonville should have been Jacksonville. We found out too late and they reached you. Hope you enjoyed that, considering it as an intelligence test.

By the way, this glitch is not on the "online" Mblem which you can see at <http://menc.us/>. I also made the improve-

ment so you don't have to have PDF reader (like Adobe Acrobat reader) to open it. Any web browser will do. It fills the screen and goes from page to page smoothly too.

Since last month, more than just Mblem went on line. So did our directory. You see, the Mensa Local groups used to print the directories and sent to all members the way the newsletter was distributed. Then, people started to worry about privacy issues. Oddly enough, there were people who do not want to be known as Mensans. Imagine that! Though the directories were for members only, there were even people who do not want their address be known by other members. Well, I wouldn't blame them on that. There were real cases when some members were bothered by others. So, US Mensa started the PDQ system. Remember? When you signed up to be a Mensa member, you filled out a form about your personal data as well as your interests, hobbies ... etc. You also filled out your preferences to specify which part of your data to be withheld from whom, the general public or other members. As a result, it would be a lot of work to sort

out what kind of information were to be listed for whom. The Mensa National office has done a great job now to create a data base with all these concerns in consideration. They update the database whenever you send in any change in address or any change in you PDQ preference. We receive this data electronically once a month, the snapshot of this data on MENC members. Instead of using it to print a hardcopy directory, I have always wanted to make it available online. Before we have a password protected area on our website, I have put it on the website associated to our announcement e-mail group, along with our photo space, file sharing space, calendar with automatic reminder ... etc. Please see page 7 about this group.

Our previous editor started to print out monthly "birthday people". Like the online directory I mentioned above, I also made online a list of members sorted by birthdays if they allow birthdays to be published. On that file, you see "birthday people" for all twelve months. So there is no need to print that column again.

(Random, from P. 2)

As far as I can tell, the solstice is historically much more significant the farther north you go, as the effects were much more obvious. Living in a tropical paradise where the temperatures and day lengths don't have extreme variations, and you don't have snow and ice 6+ months of the year as in, say, Scandinavia, wouldn't lead to this kind of ritual.

But as I said, I'm not going to talk about that. I'm also not going to get into a "this day in history" theme about significant events that have happened in December. Let me provide an example of why I don't want to do that. I picked a more or less unremarkable date in December, the 23rd, and found a web site that will tell you what happened on that day. I found over 100 births and deaths of notable peo-

ple, 4 men who went MIA during the Vietnam war, and quite possibly 200 events that occurred on that day. It seemed like every third event was of great significance and really caught my attention. I tried December 10th, and had a very similar result. Therefore, it is almost pointless to get into significant events, as you practically can't pick a day and a year that didn't have something

worth mentioning happen (unless it's a day that never happened, as I discussed last month). That said, here's a few things that I thought were interesting (but random too) that happened on December 23 (uncorrected by Gregorian calendar reform if applicable).

1888 Vincent Van Gogh cuts off his left ear.

(conti. To P. 4, Random)

## Palace II by Shiangtai Tuan

In the first installment of this travel log last month, I mentioned that I went to the Palace Museum, the Forbidden City, in Beijing, China on July 7, 2005. Because of the traffic situation, I started the tour from the North, the back entrance of the Palace. After quickly going through the Garden and many buildings, the residential palaces, I was about to go to the main part, the three main palaces.

Well, the Place complex is a rectangular area about 900 yards wide and 1000 yards long from north to south, completely enclosed by a city wall and a moat. (This complex is situated in the middle of the 4 mile by 4 mile city of Beijing, meaning "North Capital", which used to have its own city wall and moat. Now the city wall and moat have been flattened to make the inner "loop", surrounding downtown.) The three main palaces are called the front palaces but they are actually pretty much in the middle. The front (southern most) one is the largest at about 60 yards wide from east to west, and about 40 yards deep. That was where all the most important ceremonies took place. From the photo, you can sense the size by how small the people look standing right in front of the building. The photo covers from the front center to about a third of the way to the side. You see the whole view in many post card photos elsewhere but you don't usually see the inside. I took a picture standing right at the front entrance. It shows the



gilded throne situated at the back of the platform way up there above seven large steps with a gilded dragon screen behind it.

When the emperor appeared in ceremonies, he would be sitting way up in the throne. Only a few very high ranked ministers and service people would be in the building. All other high government officials, hundreds or could be thousands of them, would be standing in the large open space, lined up by their ranks. It would be an extreme honor if any one were to be called into the building to speak or to hear

directly from the emperor. Some one like me, a mere commoner, would not ever have had the possibility of even viewing the palace from afar. Things have changed since the 1911 revolution led by Dr. Sun Yetsen. Thirty eight years later, in 1949, when the communist took over Beijing, the Palace was almost destroyed because it was the symbol of imperialism. Luckily it was kept but not kept up. Thanks to tourism and the economical incentives, the majority part of the palace has been renovated. Well, there are still a few monarchies around. Maybe in hundred years, commoners like me can walk through Buckingham Palace room to room too.

The middle one of the three is relatively small in comparison. It was said to be the place where the emperor rested and changed in preparation to go to the front main palace. The one in the back is where the Emperor met the officials regularly. How regular? Well, it was not easy to be an emperor.

Very early in the morning, he would be awakened by a hot towel put on his face by a servant. How dare a servant do that? The towel had the writing on it by the first emperor of Chin Dynasty, the great grandpa, telling the children to be diligent. He would be at this palace to face the high officials about seven o'clock in the morning. The first four emperors in Chin Dynasty (about 2000 years ago) worked very hard in policy making, creating great friendship or controlling relationships with neighboring states, as well as internal policies like flood control ... etc. It was the next nine emperors gradually became lazy, ignorant, and corrupted. As people say, a dictatorship can be efficient but extremely dangerous. When policy makers are smart, they may push the country forward. Even then someone may be sacrificed. When the policy maker is no good, everything falls apart. They hurt the country as well as themselves. As opposed to dictatorship, we have started experimenting with democracy for two hundred years. So far we know it is safer for most people but less efficient. We don't know yet how it fares in the long run for humanity. Things may eventually improve in a few more hundred years.



(Random, from P. 3)

1947 The Transistor invented by John Bardeen Walter Brattain and

William Shockley was first demonstrated at Bell Laboratories

1962 Cuba starts returning US prisoners from the Bay of Pigs invasion

1968 Borman, Lovell & Anders become 1st men to orbit Moon

1968 North Korea releases Pueblo crew

1972 "Immaculate Reception" Steelers turns around a 7-6 defeat with a last second touchdown reception against the Raiders to win 13-7

1973 Persian Gulf nations double their oil prices

1975 Congress passes Metric Conversion Act

1987 Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, serving a life sentence for attempted assassination of President Gerald R Ford escapes from Alderson Prison

1997 Terry Nichols found guilty of manslaughter in Oklahoma bombing

1997 Woody Allen, 62

weds Soon-Yi Previn 27, adopted daughter of Mia Farrow

Pretty random stuff, right? Once again, the circle has been completed, and despite a foray into ordered structure, randomness once again carries the day.

A few other random facts that don't fit anywhere else. Albert R. Broccoli, producer of James Bond films, had an ancestor who was a horticulturalist, and developed a modified form of cabbage and cauliflower, guess what he named it? The movie "Ronin", directed by John Frankenheimer, is notable for several reasons. One is that it features three actors who played James Bond villains: Sean Bean - "Goldeneye", Jonathan Pryce - "Tomorrow Never Dies", and Michael Lonsdale - "Moonraker". "Ronin" is also worth noting, as it is also a reunion of Robert DeNiro and Jonathan Pryce, who were together in Terry Gilliam's "Brazil". Ian Holm was also in "Brazil" and has played both Frodo Baggins (in the BBC audio (to P. 5, Random)



## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

by Ellen Muratori

A rollicking time was had at the October Games night. Melinda K. and Ellen M. began with Trumpet, then were joined by Brian S. and Ray B. Soon our Charlottean, Robert J., started a Scrabble Game with Tom Z., W-Salemites, Anthony L. and guest, Cindy. Lynn A. came in time to participate in Perudo. The hoots and mayhem that came from that table almost deafened the concentration that was being applied to the Hunters and Gatherers version of Carcassonne at the other table. Soon the Pumpkin Hour threatened, but not before Tom, Robert, Brian and Ellen could get in a few hands of Spades.

The Rec. Center will be closed for Thanksgiving weekend, so that we have moved Games Night to Friday, Dec. 2. **MAKE NOTE OF THE CHANGE!** Also, Dec's Games have moved to Friday, Dec, 30. **MAKE NOTE OF BOTH**

### LocSecond

LocSec Column  
by Shiangtai Tuan

When I first become LocSec years ago, I promoted heavily on ExComm member meetings. At each monthly LG, I would ask the host's permission that we ExComm members could arrive at their house one hour and 15 minutes before LG so we could meet face to face. I would solicit items ahead of time and make an agenda for each meeting. Since I became LocSec this time, this practice proved to be impossible when I tried again. This was because the members of this ExComm happened not to be able to come up with time when all are free and because we lived too far apart. Yes, we MENC cover a large area – from Greensboro to the coast. It is good that members of various places are represented. So, the saving grace is that we can resolve MENC matters with the help of e-mail. With the help of face to face meeting and e-mail, we have the following items to report to you.

We, MENC, have been hit

by poverty though we struggle through it. It was at one point we were worried we would lose the privilege of having a free account since we had so little money in it. There was the time when we had to reduced Mblem to 3 or 4 printed sheet instead of 5 as we have now. Several members, Nancy, Sharon, Fran, Kim, Nina ... worked extra hard to find ways to reduce cost and postage, saving Mblem from skipping months. When the Greensboro group dissolved, about third of their members came to MENC and proportional amount of their savings came to us too. (I think they used to have people who would volunteer a lot of time to run RGs and made money, as fund to run future RGs.) So, we are not on the verge of poverty anymore. There was a discussion among the ExComm members how the MENC fund should be used. We didn't think we should dream up ways to spend money just because we had it. We emphasized that MENC fund was for whole MENC, not for any MENC activities that might benefit only a groups of members. For exam-

ple, Mblem expenses, if we ever run an RG, official mailing ...

are MENC business but a local Sunday brunch is not. This principle is independent from whether we have only a dollar or if we have a million. I think all MENC member would agree. In fact we have followed this principle all along. For instance, I have been the Speaker seeker for a long time. My job has been looking for a person or theme of interest and finding a member to host the event. The host would prepare a set up of, say, cheese and crackers and soft drinks. The setup takes money. He/she has to pay ahead of time no matter whether enough people appear who would pay for the Kitty. I would say it is not fair for the host to pay in addition to the work of hosting. However, since the "Speaker Meeting" can benefit only the people who live in the neighborhood, often in the Triangle area, it is no fair to use MENC money either. So, years ago, Jerry Asher and I each donated \$50 dollars to form a hundred dollar "Speaker Seeker Fund", or, "LG Fund" in case we need to reimburse the hosts. We

made the donation at the time when MENC fund was low so it was also used to keep up the minimum in the checking account to maintain it above the free account level. (You may see that item in Dan's Treasurer's report.) One other decision we made was to keep some in the checking account but the into two 12-month CD's maturing at six month apart. It will probably be done when you read this.

One other motion was a suggestion to increase the number of scholarship from one to two per year. The rational was that our covered region has increased and that we can now afford it. The ExComm voted it down because first of all it is given to non-Mensa-related people. Secondly, the competition of the scholarship was judged solely by a paper, presumably written by the applicant on him/herself, not necessarily related to any scholarly, intellectually, academically, or IQ related matter. It was decided that this matter can be reopened if the method of judging can also be discussed.

(Random, from P 4.) dramatization of The Lord of the Rings) and Bilbo Baggins (in the movies). Sean Bean was also in the movie version of "The Fellowship of the Ring", and his character did not live to the end of the movie, as Sean Bean's characters frequently do not live to the end of their movies (witness "Ronin" and "Goldeneye"). Ian McKellen played Gandalf

in three movies, apparently died, but came back, and he's now playing Magneto for the third time in the X-Men films, a character who just won't die, go away, or even take a break from being nasty. Richard Harris played Dumbledore twice in Harry Potter movies, and would have played him at least twice more, but unfortunately died after the second. Richard Harris was also in

"Gladiator", which featured Oliver Reed, who died before filming was complete. And finally, Oliver Reed was in the first ever movie scene that had full male nudity, and one whole paragraph without references to December. Perhaps for next month I will start early and contemplate the significance of the number 2006.

(to P. 6, Random)

## Hints to Solve Cryptogram Where Every Letter Is Replaced by Another

by Shiangtai Tuan

WFH ALFHTU TFFW ZFG FDV, XQF, MDU XLGVV  
TVXXVG QFGUA ZBGAX. FDTW XQF TVXXVGA  
NMD AXMDU MTFDV. UFHRTV TVXXVGA MGV  
SFFU XVTTXMTV ABSDA. FDTW FDV OFQVT YMW  
FNNHJW VBXLVG XLV ZBGAX FG XLV TMAX  
JFABXBFD BD XQF TVXXVG QFGUA. YMWV AFYV  
QBTU SHVAAVA. LMOV ZHD AFTOBDS XLBA FDV.

## Treasurer's Sporadic Report by Dan Singer

Howdy. This is my second rant, er, report as treasurer of MENC, since I took over from our previous treasurer who moved out-of-state several months ago. I've been a little slow in getting all my treasury-related ducks in a row, but I've finally gotten a working record keeping system together. I also was not totally aware of some of the requirements until recently, such as the fiscal year and semi-annual financial reports. Apparently MENC's fiscal year starts September 1st -- though to my understanding this is somewhat arbitrary and subject to change.

Since we haven't had a financial report since October 2004, I decided to burn the midnight oil in order to provide an annual report and once again share my innermost thoughts.

(The report is only printed in the hard copy that is sent to individual members. — the editor)

## Feghooting Again by Ed Williams

The Lewis & Clark exploratory expedition was traversing the great plains and the northwest, with that remarkable Indian woman, Sacajawea, as their interpreter (she knew several languages in addition to her native Shoshone). They stopped to visit a large Indian settlement and were invited to the Chief's teepee. It was a big one, and upon entering, they saw the Chief's three wives seated on hides. They were amazed to see the senior wife, a very large woman, seated on a hippopotamus hide, while the other two younger and smaller wives were seated on more conventional elk hides. Lewis said to Clark "Look, these people are more cultured than we had thought. They are familiar with mathematics." Clark answered "Why do you say that?" Lewis responded "Well, they are showing us that they know the Pythagorean theorem:- the squaw on the hippopotamus is equal to the sum of the squaws on the other two hides."

(Random, from P. 5, Random enough for you?)

And now, the quiz, which in keeping with the theme, is about as random as I could make it (considering I researched the questions in about 10 minutes). Okay, not entirely random, I sure seem to have gotten on a death kick.

- 1) What does a blue reflector in the middle of a traffic lane indicate?
- 2) How many voices sing the song "Hi Ho" in the Disney movie Snow White and the Seven Dwarves?
- 3) With the death of John Fiedler earlier this year, Jack Klugman and Jack Warden are the last living cast members of the title group from what film of 1957?
- 4) By current American law, what is the largest denomination coin that can be minted by the treasury, and what must it be made of?
- 5) Over 10 times as many quarters were minted in 1965 as in previous or following years. Why?
- 6) What is the name for the type of triangle with three unequal sides?
- 7) Everyone should know this one from recent news, for hurricane naming, how many names are pre-designated every year?
- 8) What changes to lists of hurricane names went into effect in 1979?
- 9) On December 10, 1919, what was banned by baseball's National League?
- 10) What was first referred to as "Tycho Magnetic Anomaly 1"?
- 11) What fictional character got a front page obituary in the New York Times in 1975?
- 12) What is the highest possible score for one five card hand of cribbage, and what is it? (OK, if you don't know cribbage, this is impossible, and if you do know it, it's merely tricky)

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(Here are the answers — but don't look too soon!

— Editor)

- 1) A fire hydrant on that side of the road
- 2) Dopey never speaks
- 3) Twelve Angry Men
- 4) \$50, one troy ounce of gold
- 5) That was the first year that silver was not used in coins, so the mint wanted to replace the silver quarters and get them out of circulation.
- 6) Scalene
- 7) 21. Q,U,X,Y, and Z are not used.
- 8) It was the first year that male names were used, creating the current pattern of alternating male/female names (David was retired that year, the first time it was ever used. It was the first male name ever retired). It was also the year that the diversity of names was increased, mixing English, French, and Spanish names.
- 9) The spitball
- 10) The monolith found on the moon in 2001: A Space Odyssey
- 11) Hercule Poirot
- 12) 29 points. The four cards in the hand need to be three 5s and a Jack. The fifth card from the cut must be the fourth 5, which is the same suit as the Jack. 12 points for Pairs Royale, 16 points for fifteens made from the Jack and each 5, and four ways of picking three 5s, and 1 point for a Jack that matches suit with the cut card. Whew.

(Continue to, well, no more)

Decoded "Hints to Solve Cryptogram " on this page

you should look for one, two, and three letter words first. only two letters can stand alone. double letters are good telltale signs. only one vowel may occupy either the first or the last position in two letter words. make some wild guesses. have fun solving this one.