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**View from a Southern Porch**  
**RVC Column**

By Mike Seigler RVC5

As many of you may already know Mensa held disciplinary hearings here in Atlanta. There were charges and countercharges involving well over a dozen officers and members of the local group. The parties spent an incredible amount of time in preparation for the hearing. (For some it was like having a second full-time job.) American Mensa spent several thousand dollars to send the Hearings Committee to Atlanta to conduct the hearing.

Chaired by Dave Remine, the Hearings Committee did an excellent job. This was an administrative hearing and the rules allowed written statements to be admitted as evidence. The parties used this to present their cases in an orderly manner that told the story in the order it had developed. For the most part everyone was civil and there weren't any of the histrionics you see on People's Court.

The hearings lasted two days and a decision was rendered a couple of weeks later. In some ways this was a positive experience. Everyone got to express their concerns and the complainants finally understood what the other parties had been saying. The Hearings Committee brought a neutral voice to the discussion that identified some problems and suggested solutions that are being acted on.

In other ways this whole matter was a disaster for the local group. Mensa in Georgia lost members and officers. People were reluctant to run for office or host activities. New members were turned off by the conflict and didn't become active. People that were not involved in any way were dragged into the dispute. The hearings have been formally concluded, but it may take years for the local group to recover.

It's possible this all could have been avoided, if everyone had been as civil in the beginning as they were at the hearings. I just finished reading a short self-help book "As a Gentleman Would Say" by John Bridges that should probably be required reading for everyone. There are hundreds of useful quotes, but I particularly like this one. "If a gentleman is subjected to a rude remark or rude behavior, he does not offer rudeness in return." This may be a little too much turn-the-other-cheek for some members, but give it a try. Let's not escalate personal complaints into major issues that affect everyone around us.

Personally speaking, I'm looking forward to a calmer New Year. I hope everyone enjoys the holidays and has a happy New Year.

Best wishes,

Mike

**Ed's Feghoot, as Seasonal and as Hoot as Any**

By Ed Williams

An oldie goodie: Before the fall of the Soviet Union, many Western visitors were assigned guides (by the KGB - though this was not openly stated) to keep an eye on what they were doing. An American couple visiting Moscow was given a guide/interpreter named Rudolf. They knew why he was there, but found him very helpful. One day, as they were going out to spend the day touring around, Rudolf advised them to take umbrellas, since, he said, it would rain heavily in the afternoon. The American man said to his wife: "It's a beautiful sunny day. Why should we bother to take umbrellas?" She replied "Rudolf the Red knows rain, dear."

**What Does it All Mean?**  
by David Skaar

Time once again for me once again to write my randomly themed column, as close to the submission deadline as I can. But before that, there is serious Culture Quest business to discuss. Registration for CQ has opened, and the test will be held on Sunday, April 30, 2006.

As we are in the eastern time zone, our starting time will be 4:00PM, with 90 minutes to answer as many questions as we can. The registration deadline is March 31, we need five people for the team, and can also register two alternates, so even if you're undecided, you can still sign up. The most important thing - your dues must be paid by April 1, or the entire team is disqualified! Strong incen-

tive to keep your dues up to date! I hope that our stalwart players from previous years will be back again, and that we can get some new people too. If you are interested, it's never too soon to let me know (das3@acpub.duke.edu), and I'm sure I'll be talking it up repeatedly until the roster is full.

(Cont. to P. 2, What Means)

**Go by percentage**  
A Lexus owner would buy \$2.99/lb coffee that tastes horrible instead of the gourmet coffee at \$10.00/lb which is 233% higher, too expensive. The Lexus, though simply a Toyota with leather seats, is only 100% higher than Toyota, a good deal in saving money, he thinks.

(Conti. From P. 1, What Means)

Enough of that, and on with the trivia. I had a crisis of conscience about writing this, as I just read a book of Ray Bradbury essays in which he is quite critical of trivial knowledge. Ray disparages the lionizing of Jeopardy champions, who are being celebrated for their catalog of facts, learned at the expense of knowledge. He feels that the emphasis is incorrectly on the Who, What, and When, when it is actually the Why and How that matters. If Ray Bradbury calls my actions into question, I get a little worried. But it didn't take me long to decide (or convince myself) that I'm not like the people he picks on. I usually do not sit down to memorize facts, I tend to pick them up in the process of actually worthwhile reading (and some comic books). True, I do spot facts and note them as good things to know if I ever go on Jeopardy, but that's just a happy side effect.

With that said, this week's theme is vocabulary, a subject that appears in CQ in some form. Vocabulary is usually taught as the memorization of empty facts. Students commonly complain about the verbal sections of standardized tests like the SAT and GRE, as they require knowing definitions of words that most students never use. The standard approach is to get a list of words that have appeared on the test in the past, and memorize them. Useful for getting a good score, but not for much else. A more useful long-term approach would be the actual understanding of language, word roots and derivations, and words of foreign extraction. And this is the sort of thing I will be discussing, thus dodging the Bradbury forbidden subject of facts without meaning, but of course I'll throw some of those in anyway.

English, as most people acknowledge, is a complicated language; Pete Seeger wrote a song on the subject, "English is Crazy". There's a quote on the subject that I greatly enjoy, it starts, "English doesn't steal from other languages". At this point, I pause for the indignant response, then finish the quote, "it follows them down dark alleys, hits them over the head, and goes through their pockets for loose grammar." Most people find this to be a pretty accurate statement. English never found a language that it couldn't take something from. I've heard one person's theory that English is a "greedy" language that wants to steal everyone else's words, but I don't much care for that theory. I prefer to think that English is an adaptable language; if there's a word that works for it, it takes it, and if there isn't one, it makes it up. The problem with that statement is that I'm anthropomorphizing (good word to

know!) English as some self-aware entity metastasizing (another good one) and absorbing all around it. Of course, it is the users of the language who are responsible for its growth and evolution. That's another reason for the constant changes of English; no one owns it. A few years back, Romania passed a law forbidding the use of any foreign words in public, in order to protect the language

([http://www.romanian.biz/2003/01/romanian\\_law\\_bans\\_english\\_in\\_public.html](http://www.romanian.biz/2003/01/romanian_law_bans_english_in_public.html)); it now takes very roundabout phrases to describe a hot dog on a bun or laptop computer in proper Romanian. A measure like that seems self-defeating, if a language can't adapt, it will die. Every existing language got here as an offshoot or evolution of a previous one, that most likely died out, or changed to become unrecognizable (about the same as dying out). I've heard multiple stories about the dialects that form when people with different languages work in international collaborations, or even just move into the same neighborhood. I've personally heard of Spanglish, Deutschlich, Russlich, and I've watched a few subtitled Indian movies in which English words and phrases keep popping in and out of the dialog.

I think Esperanto may suffer from over-controlled language syndrome. I do not claim to be an expert on Esperanto; I never studied it, but I know of its history, and have learned a handful of words and grammatical rules. While the point of Esperanto is to provide a language with straightforward grammar and consistent rules to simplify learning and communication, I think that if it were actually adopted by large numbers, it would very quickly change. As soon as people started trying to use Esperanto for everyday communication, they would run into problems of not being able to say quite what they want to say. I suspect that words from their native languages would start creeping in almost immediately, forming Esperanto dialects. International understanding may still improve, as the base would be the same for everyone, but a new language would have evolved. And that's what it takes for a language to be successful – evolution, refinement, and all the tweaking that everyday usage brings to it.

Why do new words get introduced? Because the existing words do not have the adequate meanings. I've heard it said that if there's not a word for an idea, then the idea can't truly exist for speakers of that language. I don't know if it's truly accurate, but it's difficult for me to comment on, as I can't name any concepts that I don't know about because I have no word to explain them. However, once I learn a word for a

complicated concept, I can recognize that I didn't know it before. For example, Czech has 'litost' - a state of torment created by the sudden sight of one's own misery, and Japanese has 'tatema' - the reality that everyone professes to be true, even though they may not privately believe it. Great words to know, for concepts that I might have had an idea of, but could not concretely understand and express until now.

Modern-day language purists may not like many of the new words entering the language, words like internet, homeboy, chad (as in hanging), and from the Simpsons, d'oh (it's in the Oxford English Dictionary, see

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_neologisms\\_on\\_The\\_Simpsons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_neologisms_on_The_Simpsons) for a pretty comprehensive list of words invented on the Simpsons, with variable penetrance into the language), but it has always happened. Shakespeare is credited with about 2000 neologisms, like brittle, excellent, majestic, and obscene, so if we accept that he can do it, then we have to accept it when someone else does it. If it's a good word, it sticks, and if it doesn't, it disappears. I'm told that "Ameche" was a constantly used synonym for telephone for some years (after Don Ameche played Alexander Graham Bell in 1939), but then it disappeared to the point that when I first encountered it, in an older book, it had to be explained to me. From common usage to forgotten in under 40 years (and forgotten well before Don Ameche died), that's the way it goes. On the other hand, draconian is still alive and well, 2600 years after Draco was infamous for his theories on crime and punishment.

Development of English is an iterative process. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is often considered the final arbiter on word usage and meanings. If a word is used enough, consistently, so that a meaning can be determined for it, the OED picks it up. This introduces a paradox, in that you turn to the dictionary as a final reference for whether something is a "real word", but the dictionary will add a completely fabricated word if it gets used enough. This leads people to try to create words out of meaningless syllables, as the story is that if it appears in print five times, it can go into the dictionary. Legend says that the origin of 'quiz' is like this; on a bet to see if they could invent a word, a group of people painted it on walls all over Dublin and got it into the language. True? Maybe not, but indicative of how things happen.

(Conti. to P. 3, What Means)

(Conti. From P. 2, What Means)

More often, new words are adaptations of old words. Cyberspace, suitcase (which used to be suit-case), cooperate (which used to be co-operate), telegraph, telephone, and television. Television is an interesting case, as it come from both Latin and Greek roots. When the word was coined, people had better classical educations in these languages, recognized this, and thought it was ridiculous to mix the two like that. It stuck however. Other options are the assigning of a related but distinct new meaning to an old word, with the new meaning overtaking the old. Computer is a good example of this. Computation and computing were around long before what we now call a computer. A computer used to be a person who did computation; electronic devices that compute were originally called automatic computers, electronic computers, or the like, to distinguish them. The new meaning has since come to dominate to the point that the old is mostly forgotten. In my world, we talk about transcription and translation, new meanings for single words that describe very complex biological processes (production of RNA and proteins for gene expression). To a medical transcriptionist or a translator of ancient Greek scrolls, the concept is the same, but the actual processes are completely different.

I seem to be running out of time and space now, and I've only just touched on the topic of adaptation of words and changing definitions. And in that vein, a favorite topic of mine, perfectly clean words that have been given dirty connotations. Perhaps I can further (pay attention, that's a changing word right there) explore this next time. Anyway, onto the pointless trivia questions.

1- I mentioned neologisms in the Simpsons – for these Simpsons created words, identify them as portmanteau, tmesis, conflation, minced oath, Orwellian newspeak, humorous mispronunciation, or eponym

A - Metabomolism

B - Wel-diddly-elcome

C - electromicide - a process of introducing severe electrical currents into the mouth

D - pull a Homer

E - GM Chrysler!

F - Crisitivity – an English adaptation of the Chinese character

(that I'm told is real) symbolizing both crisis and opportunity

G - Malparkage

H - poindextrose – a pheremone secreted by nerds

2– From a previous Culture Quest – What word comes from Arabic, and means a precise set of instructions for solving a problem?

3– Based on its pronunciation, how should Pago Pago (capital of American Samoa) be spelled?

4– What American state has a name that was supposedly an Indian word meaning “gem of the mountains”, but appears to actually be a total fabrication?

5– What now world famous British author worked on the Oxford English Dictionary project as a young man after World War I, on the W section, and agonized long over a definition for Walrus?

6– Dr. W.C. Minor contributed thousands of entries to the original Oxford English Dictionary project. What was his professional status during this time?

7– Who is considered responsible for popularizing the term ‘security blanket’?

8– What author (and onetime Mensa member) is usually credited with creating the word robotics, although he was sure that he borrowed it from someone else?

9 – What revolutionary word, to the best anyone can determine, was created by William Gibson in a 1985 book?

10– What word of Greek origin contains the letter sequence ‘chth’

11– Who is the Norwegian prime minister whose name became a term for a turncoat, traitor, or all around weasel?

— Answers on P. 6 —

## MENC Participation in Mensa Scholarship Program

By Ed Williams

The scholarship cycle is moving right along. Applications and essays are beginning to trickle in (as I write in mid-December) even though the deadline for submission is not until Jan. 15. I was wondering why I have not received more requests for application forms, until I got an email from the National Scholarship Chair, giving a list of groups with the number of applications that have been downloaded from the National website. MENC (Group 5-275) is at the top of the list!! The URL is

<<http://merf.us.mensa.org/scholarships/zipfinder.php>>

I had, of course, included this in the notices I sent out to all the daily and weekly newspapers in our area, plus all the universities,

colleges, community colleges, and all the high schools whose addresses I could find. I hope we get a lot of applications. After the Jan. 15 deadline, I will send the essays to be judged by our three volunteer judges. We have two new ones this year. After years of great service as judges, Nancy Lee and Sharon Ochsman stepped aside, and Ann Lewis and Cherie Ernest agreed to take their places. Kim Oliver stays on as a judge; and Betsy Barbeau will continue to do the tabulating. Betsy is a former Mensan who had to leave for family health reasons. We should be very grateful to these folks, because judging can be a tough job, and tabulating is not simple.

Last year we had one national winner, one regional winner, and our own MENC winner. I hope we have more this year.

### No Chess Scholarship

By Ed Williams

The Winter Chess Tournament was be-

ing held at one of the more classy chain hotels. It had a huge reception area, full of chairs, sofas and tables. Every day, after the day's events were over, all the players

would gather in that area and brag about their accomplishments. Chess nuts boasting in an open foyer!

## Proctor's Podium

Ellen Muratori

At this point, MENC's testing program is working according to the goal that was aimed for. We have proctors situated in the well-populated areas of our group, so that we can offer test sessions, somewhere in MENC, on a monthly basis with the expectation of reaching most of the testing prospects who wish to qualify for admission into Mensa. In 2005, a total of 26 test sessions were held throughout MENC.

A hearty "thank you" to those who have come forward to give of their time and effort to help increase membership, and thus to increase the activities within the group. During 2005, the following members became proctors for MENC: Joli Brooks in Jacksonville, Peter Chiodo in Fayetteville, Audrey Lambert in Durham, Jay Parr in Greensboro, Cherie Ernest for Apex, Chris Barnett in Wilmington, and Fran Greenstein also for Apex.. Joan Kramer, the long-time proctor for Triad Mensa, is a re-certified proctor in Greensboro.

In the year 2006, two proctors will be in training: Brenda

Stewart in Greenville and Laura Wiley in Raleigh. Myself? I'm the wild card! Wherever needed.

A "thank you" also, to two former active proctors: Dennis Osborne (Raleigh) and Nina Ward (Vanceboro). Sometimes the demanding, and immediate, responsibilities of our daily lives does not permit continued participation in volunteer activities.

Regarding prospects: a total of 97 were tested during the year 2005. Testing was conducted at local libraries without room rental expense. Location-wise, the distribution of prospects tested was thus: Apex 32, Greensboro 19, Wilmington 15, Durham 12, Fayetteville 7, Jacksonville 6, Graham and New Bern 2 each, and in Greenville and Rockingham 1 each.

The library at Raleigh's Cameron Village was being renovated during the year, so that we had to use the Eva Perry Library in Apex and the Main Library in Durham, for Raleigh residents. Cameron Village Library re-opens in January, 2006, and will provide an easier location for prospects to drive to.

The years 2004 and 2005 were developmental years for MENC's Testing Program. In 2006, it will be fine-tuned so that the next Testing/Proctor Coordinator can reap the excitement of selling Mensa to prospects and seeing MENC grow.

Any questions:

Ellen Muratori <summerellen@mymailstation.com>

### FOUR POEMS

By Ryan Sloan

1. "It seems"  
It seems, I feel pain  
all of the time.  
I have tears in my eyes,  
and I deeply whine.  
It seems, everyone  
cut their eyes at me,  
The eyes feel like daggers  
stabbing through me.  
It seems, the sun  
will never rise.  
All I see is rain  
all of the time.  
But then, I realize,  
oh, I realize, indeed,  
as long as I have God,  
nothing's as bad as it seems.

2. "Midnight in the Garden"  
She walks slowly but surely  
at the same hour of each day.  
Her hair is long and dark;  
her clothes are black or gray.  
She speaks not on her journey  
as she looks at her fields of green.  
She smiles at the flowers,  
and she plucks away the weeds.  
So often is the case,  
she removes some flowers also.  
She does this not out of spite  
but so, some other plants may grow.  
She tends over her crops  
as they lay down in slumber.  
She protects and shields the fields  
as the young are by their mother.  
This lady, this woman of no face  
is seen by everyone,

when they are at their end,  
and a new plant's life has begun.

3. "I Woke up this Morning"  
I woke up this morning,  
and I didn't have a home.  
I woke up this morning,  
Lawd, Lawd.  
I woke up alone.  
I used to have a wife,  
and I used to have a son.  
I woke up this morning,  
Lawd, Lawd,  
and I didn't have one.  
I woke up this morning,  
and no land was around me.  
I woke up this morning,  
Lawd, Lawd.  
I woke up in a dead sea.  
I had some friends  
living next to me.  
I woke up this morning,  
Lawd, Lawd,  
and all I had was me.

4. "The Little Black Boy"  
The little black boy,  
living across the street,  
ain't got no toys  
but the shoes on his feet.  
The little black boy,  
struggling to survive,  
can't get employed  
since he ain't even five.  
The little black boy,  
getting food from the trash,  
plays like he's coy  
for a dollar in cash.  
The little black boy,  
smiling like the bright sun,  
doesn't realize

### ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR VOTE

LocSecond Column  
by Shiangtai Tuan

As I understand, several members are very eager about the MENC election. To my surprise, the election chair told me not many have come forth to nominate themselves or other members. For the coming year, Margo, one of the members at large in our ExComm, has gone to Washington, DC to search for an ideal job. Also, I am not running for MENC office next year. That means we need at least two people to replace our positions. The high number of our members also allows us to have one more member at large. I hope very much you would ring forth, the clarion, and run for an office. It would be wonderful if some of you Wilmington, Greenville, Fayetteville area people would weigh in at the helm. I know this is not a high profile, high income job with power and fame, only a volunteer position. However, you will have the satisfaction of experiencing doing something for some others while asking for no return.

A slate will be printed in February issue of Mblem and you will enjoy voting for up to seven of the names or write in your own.

The word "menc" means "run for an office". What did you say, "No"? Well, It means as much that as "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act" means "USA Patriot"

Did you say: "A penny saved is a penny earned"? Tell me. Where did you find your bank with 100% interest rate?

When the gas price was high, some one found a station with lower numbers on the pump. He drove "only" 2 miles out of the way to "fill'er up" with 10 gallons at \$2.98 instead of \$3, saving 20 cents. He used 40 cents on the extra 4 miles even though his car has fairly good gas mileage of 30 miles per gallon.

## CLUB MED SIG GATHERING

February 4-11, 2006 Guadeloupe, French West Indies Active Mensans of all ages, including children(!), are invited to join the Club Med SIG of American Mensa for a week of beach sports and fun at the Guadeloupe Club Med starting February 4, 2006. Sports include sailing, windsurfing, archery, flying trapeze, tennis, dancing, snorkeling, beach volleyball, and kayaking. All sports equipment, lessons, French/Caribbean meals, and drinks are included in the room price of \$95 (D.O.). Just bring your swimsuit and passport. If you want to climb an active volcano, bring your hiking shoes. Meet the Mensa group Saturday evening in front of the main restaurant in Club Med at 7:25 P.M. for dinner, followed by a week of active fun on the Guadeloupe Riviera. Details are on the SIG website at [www.MensaClubMed.org](http://www.MensaClubMed.org). Contact Erica Byrne, SIG coordinator, at [EMByrne@attglobal.net](mailto:EMByrne@attglobal.net) with any questions. Registration is free. SIG membership is free.

Erica says: Spontaneous and last-minute travelers are welcome. ALL ages are welcome! — Editor

## Greensboro Coordinator's Corner

By Ellen Muratori

The title for this month's column should be "Recharge the Batteries of Your Body!" How to? Join us at the Saturday Night Supper! Cafeteria Food is not a gourmet's delight. However, there are Choices; and after December's Outlay, the wallet can use the reprieve that a cafeteria offers. Usually members from High Point join us.

Tweaky Tuesday Lunch in Greensboro, another but different cafeteria outing, brings out the local business crowd. We're in the no-smoking section. Tim Joseph, the Harlesses, Max and Cathy, and Alan Fields offered a conversation so diversified that I forgot to take notes.

And Games Night gives us an opportunity to really enjoy a good laugh. Perudo seems to be a favorite. The bluffing is hard to detect, until you lose one of your dice! Brian and Ellen started the evening early with a game for two called The Castle, another version of the Carcassonne group. They were joined later by Melinda, Tom, Ray and Lynn for a fast game of Trumpet, and even later, just before the Center's Cinderella hour, an even faster game of Aw, Hell!. Try to catch this event on December 30, Friday Night.

Aw, Heck! Where can ya get a quicker, cheaper mental fix than at a Mensa meeting? See ya next week!

## Oldie but Goodie by Ed Williams

This is an old classic, but some of you may not have heard it. A major zoo in Southern California had, as one of its major attractions, a huge pool in which a number of porpoises were kept. They seemed to appreciate all the people who came to see them, but they appeared to have

an unusual sense of humor. When the audience consisted largely of older people, in addition to their usual tricks, they would indulge in sexual activity. Some old people complained to the city council, which ordered the zoo administration to do something about it. The zoo manager had a friend who was a professor of studies of sea mammals, who advised the manager

to feed them sea gulls. He said that sea gulls contained a hormone suppressant that would solve the problem. So, since the zoo grounds bordered on the ocean, the manager took his shotgun and went down to the beach, where he shot a number of sea gulls. As he was returning with his bag, he encountered one of the oldest residents of the zoo - an old lion, who since he was

so placid and solemn was allowed to roam freely. He was lying across the pathway, basking in the sun. The manager stepped over him, and was immediately arrested by a state trooper who happened to be there. He was charged with violating the Mann Act, in that he was transporting gulls across a staid lion for immoral porpoises.

## Comfy?

At large column  
by Shiangtai Tuan

It is winter and a very gemütlich picture is one the Grandma wraps herself with a warm throw holding a cup of hot tea up her lips, sipping and breathing over it. This is definitely the best way coping with the cold and dry air.

Against cold yes, what about dry?

Well, feeling dry is a relative matter. You may see water starts to condense on the inside of your window and you still feel so dry your skin "cracks". This is where "relative humidity" comes into play.

You know that more sugar can be dissolved in hot water than in cold water. Water "dissolves" into air pretty much the same way. Hotter air can "carry" more moisture, i.e., water, in it. Let's not getting too precise but use some approximate numbers to illustrate the situation. Say, starting with a roomful of dry air at 70 degrees, you can boil ten gallons of water in the room and you start to see water condense on furniture

and even worse, on books. That is the capacity. If you had boiled only 5 gallons of water, the relative humidity would have been 50%. Say, at 50 degrees the capacity is 9 gallons per roomful. Then, 5 gallons of water in the same room will make it 5/9, or about 56%.

If you dump a few spoonfuls of sugar into a cup of water, some will dissolve but will not to the point of saturation. It is the same with water dissolving in air. In nature, if air and open water are left alone, water will "dissolve" into air to the point the humidity reaches about 50%. Say, it is 50 degrees outside and the relative humidity is 50% which sounds normal. However it means it has 4.5 gallons of water per roomful of air. When that air comes in your house and is heated up to 70 degrees, the relative humidity becomes 45%, too dry for comfort. That's why you need humidifiers in the winter even though it does not look too dry outside.

It is even worse than that. To

save heating and cooling bills, some people keep the temperature 10 degrees lower in the winter (say, at 68) than that in the summer (say, 78). When you look at the humidity gauge, you may say, "Ha, the humidity is 50% here. I should be fine." But no. Your body makes sure the temperature in your body is constant. It knows it is not the same thing when the air is heated up inside your lung. So, keep the humidity higher in winter or be sure to keep a hot cup of tea in your hand, under your nose, all times.



A Carnivore (LG news)

## Uplifting LG News by Shiangtai Tuan

Lift up your eyes and look at the stars as we people used to do for centuries. Don't let the modern high-tech and busy life style keep your head down. Well, it might be a little cold outside. We will, again, using high-tech, watch the stars in the comfort of the warmth of Morehead Planetarium of Chapel Hill.

When I was about 6 or 8, we lived in the country side. In the summer evenings, my siblings and some visiting cousins would enjoy staying outside, telling stories under the stars. I learnt the legend of the Weaving Lady (the star Vega as you know it) with her loom on one side and her husband with two children on the other side of the Silver River (known as the Milkway in the West). I also learnt about the eight cornered well with one corner missing (a ring of seven stars) because the Heavenly Queen, in a rage, threw a tea pot at it and broke one corner off. Many other stories too. One of the cousins was interested in Western legends. She told us many stories from old Greek tales and pointed out the constellations which corresponded to the mythological characters.

Guess what, though China is half the earth away, we see the same summer stars as in the US! Of course, you already knew that. Well, we do see a set of different stars in the winter. Chapel Hill Planetarium has a program to introduce the "current" stars. This month, we will go find out what we missed from not go sit out in the cold.

The Show is at 8PM and will run for about 50 minutes. The attached museum will be open from 6:30 to 9:00 PM. We will buy our own tickets and meet in the museum at 7:30 so we have some time to chat and go into the planetarium together. Of course, you may go as early as 6:30 and explore the museum as I would do. For identification, I will bring an issue of Mblem or carry an "M" sign (a Mensa logo about 3 inches in size). By the way, if anyone wants to get together before hand for a dinner in Chapel Hill, please let me know.

I am glad to report to you that we have had fairly successful LGs lately. We had 13 (including a less than one year old baby) attending Mary Ann Nilsonn's presentation of "Women Composers". She made it into a formal concert, with printed program and chamber music seating. After the concert, we sat around and talked about the works and lives of the composers. It was like back

in Mozart's time when people used to enjoy chamber music at home in their "chambers".

In November, about 20 of us were at the Carnivore Preservation Trust. The guide was very friendly, explained well, and very knowledgeable. That was not surprising because she is on faculty at UNCCH. It was a great day, yes, remember, when it was still warm? One thing I never seen before: tiger spraying. Well, I knew animals mark their territories. Cats, dogs, wolves ... urinate on trees or furniture to show their ownership. (Hopefully, people do not do that.) I have also heard the term "to spray" but did not know it as the tiger demonstrated. Thanks to our guide who warned us. So we all ran away from the fence when we saw the tiger turned around. He actually "sprayed" as far as 10 feet many times. I think he enjoyed watching people ran as much as we enjoyed watching him doing his thing. (By the way, the few who did not come to activities much, could you send me your names and contact info again? I list my notes.)

Date and time: Jan. 21, 7:30PM

Place: Inside the Chapel Hill Planetarium Museum.

Contact and Directions: See back of the calendar page, printed Mblem.

## Top Ten Reasons to Volunteer at the World Gathering 2006

By Kay Klasen

10. You will meet new people from all over the world, many of whom may become new business/social friends.
  9. There is nothing quite as satisfying as the warm feeling you experience when you help someone.
  8. Volunteers do it "for free"!
  7. You will be "in the know" regarding current events at our World Gathering.
  6. Appreciation. Volunteers are appreciated for what they do, for what they know, and for the time they spend helping.
  5. You can meet your future mate. I can name 6 couples that met and got married through Mensa, including me!
  4. Knowing without the collective you, it just wouldn't happen. That's how important volunteers are.
  3. You will be a member of a very special group, respected and appreciated for your skills and experience.
  2. You will help make this event one of the best ever, one that ran smoothly with plenty of helping hands.
- And the number one reason for volunteering at the World Gathering:
1. Uniting Mensans - Volunteers are the lifeblood that binds our worldwide organization together. Come join us for an infusion!

Kay Klasen sez: I am the Volunteers Coordinator for the World Gather '06 in Orlando. I am trying to get people interested in signing up to help through out the event. Here is a piece I wrote for publication. I would appreciate if you could put this in your newsletter, flyers, on your web site, on the wall in the Ladies Room... You know what I mean. Contact me, Kay Klasen, WG06 Volunteer Coordinator (<http://WG06.us.mensa.org>), to explore the volunteer opportunities. The possibilities are endless! Here is a partial list: Registration, Speaker, Food Service, Hospitality, Security, Ambassador, Games Host(ess), Teachers, Ticket Taker, Tour Guide, Speaker Greeter, Goodie Bag Stuffer (in Orlando)

### Answers to "What Does it All Mean"

- 1 - A - Mispronunciation
- B - Tmesis - a word or phrase inserted into another word
- C - Conflation - combination of two words (portmanteau also may be appropriate)
- D - eponym - a word derived from a person's name, like the answer to #11.
- E - Minced oath - a way to avoid direct blasphemy
- F - Portmanteau - coined by Lewis Carroll, a word combining sounds and meanings of two others. Like slithy, frabjous, camcorder, and spork (conflation may also be appropriate)
- G - Orwellian newspeak - adding 'mal' to another word to indicate a bad version of the root
- H - portmanteau
- 2 - Algorithm
- 3 - Pango Pango
- 4 - Idaho. The name was almost given to another territory first, that territory was finally named Colorado.
- 5 - J.R.R. Tolkein
- 6 - He was a resident of Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum
- 7 - Charles Schultz, from Linus' security blanket in Peanuts
- 8 - Isaac Asimov
- 9 - Cyberspace
- 10 - autochthonous - indigenous, often used in Biology and Anthropology. Also acceptable is chthonic - of the underworld
- 11 - Quisling