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Event Calendar

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Really nothing interesting in this issue*
- *You cannot be fooled, —*
—Page 1
- *A lot of Pain, no Gain.
Or the other way round.*
— Page 3
- *Visual or Audio? — Page 6*

Special

You didn't for a moment believe that MENCan would contribute to Mblem, did you?

Mblem

April Fool's

Day

This article is MENC business only, not for public viewing.

Connie Moses Ballroom in Carolina Theater

Shiangtai Tuan

In an accompany article (Often, P 3), I mentioned a theater group I am associated with, Durham Savoyards, and the show HMS Pinafore we did last month. It was done in the Carolina Theater in Durham and our opening night reception was in the second-floor beautiful Connie Moses Ballroom. That reminded me of the Carolina Theater renovation.

Carolina Theater was built many years ago when Durham was young and charming. You can still see how much detail was built into the frame work around the stage. Unfortunately, Durham suffered the same fate as many other US Cities when people started to move to the suburbs. Down town became desolated and stage show lost its audience. Carolina Theater became a movie house and a cheap one at that. Somehow, the second floor ball room was used to store chairs. The large beautiful glass window broke too. As a result, pigeons flew in and made nests in it.

For a while the city of Durham almost decided to condemn the aging but still beautiful building. In the earlier 80's (or 70's) a group of conservationists started to lobby for fixing it. Connie Moses was the strongest facilitator. In addition to her whole family (Monty, her husband a professor at Duke, and her daughters, Mollie and Kitty) there were many others who followed her lead. Among them there were many from this theater group, Durham Savoyards. There were Don and Pepper Fluke, both professors at Duke, Pat Kennen, a professor and doctor at Duke Medical Center, Dick Watson, a Duke History Professor ... and many others I cannot remember. At the time, I was new in Savoyards and was recruited to help. When we went into the Second floor ball room, we realized that the pigeons had made their living quarters in that room for years. They left bird drops that can be measured not by inches but by feet at places. I remember digging out pigeon drops with shovels along side those extinguished doctors and professors. You simply cannot imagine the difference between that and the brilliant ball room that it is now. Huge glass windows are on one side and mirrors on the other. Two huge chandeliers hang from the ceiling. A large sign that says "Connie Moses Ballroom" is by the entrance. Connie died the year after the renovation started. The Ballroom was named after her in memory of her effort. It is sad that she never saw the Ball room decorated the way it is.

Often, Frequently, Only Once

Shiangtai Tuan

You may have known that I belong to a local theater group called the Durham Savoyards. The sole purpose of this group is to produce one Gilbert and Sullivan show per year. This year we are doing HMS Pinafore. In the dialog, the captain of Pinafore is to use the word "often". In this production, the company decided to use the pronunciation in which the letter "t" is not silent – for the benefit of some American audience. This is of course not consistent with the original British pronunciation used by Sir W. S. Gilbert. As you may remember, "often" is one of the main jokes in his Pirates of Penzance. In that show, the famous pirates were known to let go anyone who claimed to be orphans because they themselves were orphans. When they caught the Major General, he claimed to be an orphan. The Pirate King said he heard it often. Since the "r" in orphan is also silent the conversation became ridiculous until the Major general said:

"Stop! I think I can see where we are getting confused. When you said 'orphan', did you mean 'orphan', a person who has lost his parents, or 'often', frequently!"

"Ah, I beg pardon – I see what you mean – frequently."

"Ah, you said 'often' frequently"

"No, only once."

"Exactly – you said 'often, frequently' only once."

I believe this line of conversation has been imitated often, frequently, in many comic relieves. Of course, this joke could not be made if the letter "t" were not silent.

It also reminded me of an English professor I had in Connecticut. When I first came to the US as a graduate student in Wesleyan University for a Master's degree, they had an interesting professor give us foreigners an introduction to English. He taught by taking us to markets, restaurants ... to

learn, not only the language, but also the culture. In the last class, he gave us a little review of the different "kinds" of English there were. In addition to regional difference, he told us about the "class difference". He did say that there were no classes in America. However, he started by talking about English in England. He told us that the Dukes, Barons ... had become as poor as (or poorer than) commoners but they still tried to hang on to their tradition by speaking their language. It could not be called the Upper class language any more so the term U-speech was created. This term was coined by Alan S. C. Ross in 1954. I thought our professor said that a Nancy Mitford was doing research with Professor Ross on this subject but I may have remembered wrong. Anyway, she picked up the subject and wrote a booklet called Noblesse Oblige. Our professor recommended it highly. I bought a copy but it was soon "borrowed" by somebody and never returned. If you are interested, you may find most of the related material if you do a Google search on "U and non-U English" or "Nancy Mitford" who was quite an interesting character herself. In any case, our professor told us that it was just the opposite in America. Not like in England, there had been no upper class left over from before. However, there was a group of people who newly gained their wealth and tried as hard as possible to shake off their past, at least in the eyes of their new neighbor whom they obtained by buying new houses in "better" neighborhoods. In addition to displaying their station wagons (SUVs, in modern day standard) they would go so far as to change their speech to show they were not really that uncouth. One sign he said was that they would try to use longer, fancier words (lavatory instead of bathroom, for instance) or to give their new born babies some outrageously fancy, Greek names. One other sign was to pronounce all letters in a word whether it was supposed to be silent or not. To pronounce "t" in "often" was one of the examples he cited as a tale tell sign of a nouveau riche.

Winter Health

Shiangtai Tuan

I would like to revisit two issues I talked about before.

The first is about dry skin, bleeding nose, and headache caused by dry air. All these are cause not by the absolute amount of water in the air but by relative humidity. This is obvious because the water (moisture in your tissue) evaporates faster when the relative humidity is lower. Both my allergy doctor and my ENT doctor (because of my nasal problems) told me to keep the relative humidity on 50% or higher. So, please get your-

self a humidity gauge. Keep it above 50 by using humidifiers or by boiling water with your kettle. Now you know why they used to keep huge kettles in their fire places in colonial time.

Your friends do not tell you every minute that exercise is good for you. In fact if anyone does that to me, he/she will soon cease to be

tate the brain to grow more brain cells. They also tell you to buy their exercise machine, equipment, pills ... etc. Seldom will you find anyone who would tell you how you can exercise without selling you something. They know to spend money to buy exercise equipment is one way to be rid of the guilty feeling of not exercising. So, you exercise

less after you buy the stuff and the vicious circle continues. Now, I am writing out what you are to do and it is easy.

Saying found in fortune cookies:

"A good editor is one who edits other people's writings."

"A bad editor writes his/her own."

"A Mblem editor has no others' writing to edit but to write his own."

my friend because I hate people bugging me. Well, on TV or radio, everybody tells you exercise is good for you. Today, I even heard from the TV news that exercise can agi-

For the next two weeks after you read this article, do this.

(Conti. P. 4, Health)

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Ellen Muratori

First Saturday Supper at McAlister's brought out a number of members who hadn't attended in a while. We discussed the mechanics of establishing a new group (Triad Mensa), and how to balance a budget given Income vs Expenses. Basic stuff, but taking on a different aspect when analyzed by inventive minds. Sarah Maenle joined us this month. Ben Wyatt, the new member, listened while Tom Tyson introduced a whopper savings plan for doing a newsletter. Melinda Kite mulled over the possibility. Rosemary Tyson detailed a bicycling expedition at the coast, while Brian Stumpfig added to the scenery with travel exploits at the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. McAlister's was not the empty place that it had been a month ago; but we sat in a corner that allowed for conversation.

Games Night in February was at the Burton's house. The furnishings of the home (almost) provided more of an interest than the games themselves. Thank you, Ray and Jennifer, for a very gracious evening. Melinda K. and Rick Tolley were relaxed in conversation, a la a typical "hospitality room" at an RG. Jim Martinez enjoyed the Carcassone Game with Kay Bishop, Rick and Melinda. Ray, Jennifer, Tom Zavist, Brian S., and myself played Twiddler. Of course, Ray who was keeping score, won. (Did you know that it is a Mensa Rule that "he who keeps score, wins!"?) Then came the pivotal card game of Sequence. I call it 'pivotal' because with increasing conversation involved in the ancestral and historical facts of the fabulous family collection, games night had come to a finish. That is, until Kay saw Ellen leaving and summoned one more game. Environmentally oriented Eco Fluxx! Nice change of pace. NOTE: April 28, 7pm, Games to be held at Melinda Kite's, #4 Old Farm Court, Gso, 27407. Melinda's phone: 336 854 1278, or email summerellen@mymailstation.com for directions.

The second Thursday in Winston-Salem brings out a mixed crowd from the Triad area. The River Birch Lodge ambience is that of an apres-ski lodge! All that's missing are the blizzard and howling winds on the outside. Thank goodness! Just bring on the forks and marshmallows. Fireplaces available!

Video Viewing (second Friday night) is going to require someone's home, whether a Friday or Saturday night. We'll keep going at the Center, but we're being asked to leave at 9pm (budget crunch), and that doesn't leave time for discussion. There are no snack bars nearby for us to go to. So, can anyone provide us with a floor? Tom Tyson has ALL the equipment to bring with him for the showing. Complete.

You can see, our month, here in the Triad, is a busy one. Y'all come.

(Conti. From P. 3, Health)

Hold your left hand in front of your chest palm towards you. Place your right hand inside of the left hand and push it out. Try to keep your left hand in place, i.e., exert strong resistance to the push by the right hand. Let the hands be pushed away from you and then pulled back. Do that ten times and change hands (push out with left hand this time) and do ten times this way. You can do this while watching TV, reading a book, or having an argument with someone in your family. This takes care of the isometrics for a week.

Old Chinese proverb:

"Not to step over an ocean while carrying a mountain" is in the category of unable, not unwilling. "Not to pick up a cane for an elderly" is in the category of unwilling, not unable.

New proverb:

"Not to step over an ocean while carrying a mountain" is in the category of unable, not unwilling. "Not to contribute to Mblem" is in the category of unwilling, not unable.

(Conti. To P. 6. Health)



A former MENC member, Betsy B., used to tell me: "You, being the speaker seeker, should know more than anyone else that Mensans are most apathetic. Why bother to create more activities." Actually, I did not know that. I do know now, why should I bother to ask for Mblem contributions.

HMS Pinafore

Sir Joseph's sisters, cousins and aunts.

(All women have blue hair and pale face. See actual color on our website,
<http://menc.us/.>)

If I were a member of ExComm, I would move to fire this editor who fills pages with his own writings. I would, of course, have to take the consequences. That is, I would have to look for a new editor AND to start writing for Mblem, horror.



HMS Pinafore

Sailors of the Royal Navee.

(Nose and cheeks are in bright red. See it on our website.)

Arts

Shiangtai Tuan

Some people say there is a gender difference in verbal or spatial perceptions. Sorry I forgot which is which. For instance, to go to a Mensa party, is it true that men can follow a written paragraph of driving directions and women can follow a map better? Or, is it the other way round? In the mean time, I also heard that there is a difference in the appreciation of various kinds of Music depending on one's intelligence. Why did I say that? For years, I have tried to promote Gilbert and Sullivan shows among Mensans and I never, well, hardly ever, got any response. I belong to a group called Durham Savoyards the sole purpose of which is to produce one Gilbert and Sullivan show per year. For the past 17 years since I joined Mensa, I have sent notices every March for our April show. Only two people answered in that many years. So I finally gave up this year, did not even mention our production of HMS Pinafore which, by the way, has already happened in March. Now, I start to think maybe the Mensans are more sophisticated than Gilbert and Sullivan show level. The higher class musicians often con-

sider G and S shows much below the level of grand opera. Though Mensans try to deny they are of an elite group but who knows. Maybe MENCs have higher taste and higher expectations. So this year I will try telling you about grand opera news. In April, I will be in the Opera Company North Carolina's production of "La Boheme".

OCNC has been in existence for several years, producing one grand opera per year. I have been in their opera chorus for "LaTraviata", "Samson and Delilah", "Turandot", "Tosca", "Merry Widow", "Barber of Seville", and "Don Giovanni". Their tradition is to hire known opera stars of international reputation for the lead roles. The orchestra members are often musicians from the NC Symphony. They rent sets and costume from professional companies or opera houses all through the country. For instance, the set we used for some of the operas was used at the San Francisco Opera. For some of the minor roles and chorus they hold auditions locally. By local, I mean people from North and South Carolina and Virginia. In fact, we have had chorus members from as far as Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. This year, they are to produce Giacomo Puccini's La Boheme, one of my most favorite op-

eras. The Bohemian life style has always intrigued me. I have always admired an artist's life: enjoy music, arts and freedom. Of course, it is not possible now and it was probably only existed in fantasies. Today, people only worship what the record label says. To be an artist, you either starve or be a waiter or waitress, unless you made it on the best seller list. I am afraid I am getting off the subject. In any case, please do come to see La Boheme in the historic Memorial Hall in Raleigh on April 13 and 15.

Now, don't stop here. There is something else I want to tell you. I will be in Capital Opera Company's production of another Puccini. This time it is Madama Butterfly and it is to be on May 25 and 27. Years back, the National Opera Company based in Raleigh used to have a performance in Meredith College at the end of the season. Now that the National Opera Company moved to Winston-Salem, the faculty members at Meredith College started their own opera company. They use pretty much the same strategy but in a smaller scale. For instance, their sets and costume will not be as fancy. However, since they have a well trained group of singers on campus, the quality of the voices is usually superb.

(Conti. From P. 4, Health)

In this week also do the following. Stand in front of a chair. Grab hold of the chair arms. Put some of your weight it. Start running in place if you can. Do not let your toe leave the ground so as not to create an impact. If that is too hard for you, just lift your feet up a little pretending you are running. Of course, you can do this while watching TV ... Now comes the easy part. Yawn a few times. While yawning, stretch both hands upwards. (Reach for the sky, though no one is holding you up.) Now comes the fun part. Close your eyes; don't listen to anything; don't say anything either. (Remember the three monkeys?) Breathe in and out deeply but very slowly for seven times. That takes care of your isometric, aerobic exercise, stretch and relaxation for two weeks.

For the next two weeks add (not replacing what you would do) pulling your arms left and right ten times. While you do your pretended running, add pretended jumping ten times every time you finish fifty steps of running. While stretching, do this in addition: Stretch one arm up and one arm down. Do this while standing. Now, in the breathing section, do your deep breathing seven times first. For the second seven times do this: arch your back backwards when you inhale. You should feel your shoulders and hips go back too. When you exhale, pull your pelvis forward. You should be able to check with your fingers to feel your tummy muscles tighten. After that, do seven more relaxing deep breathing.

So, you know what you do everyday for the next four weeks. We will add something for the next month.