Mensa World Journal

MARCH 2017 issue #050

Call for nominations

***Polymath Mensans*:**
Henrik Neubauer
Saila Seppo

Mensa International on FaceBook
Polyglotism and Intelligence
Learning to Forgive

Contents

Front page: Dr. Henrik Neubauer is, at 87, one of the oldest Mensans in Europe (read more on **p. 6-7**). Photo: Jaka Gasar.

Correction: On **p. 5** of the MWJ February 2017 issue, the article on the Logical Olympiad was written by Zuzana Kořínková (not by Zuzana Polinková). On **p. 8** the image caption ascribes the photo of the current Mensa International Ombudsman, Martyn Davies, to the IBD in Kyoto. The photo was taken at a previous IBD. With apologies./ Karin W. Tikkanen

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE *JUNE* ISSUE: APRIL 1st

In my first column as Editor, I asked: *What do you do in your national Mensa, to make Mensa meaningful to you?*

This issue is a collection of material from around the world, and serves to show - again! - the great variety there is among the members of Mensa International. We meet two Mensa members, Finnish Mensan Saila Seppo (p. 5), and Slovenian Mensan Dr. Henrik Neubauer (p. 6), who both work tirelessly to make the most of their capacities, in their different professions - and neither of them have settled for only one.

There is also a piece on the benefits of knowing several different languages (p. 7), written by the polyglot Thomas Hally. As a linguist myself, who speaks four languages and reads another six or seven, I have never doubted that intelligence and polyglotism is somehow interconnected, and now it seems to be proven.

Have you ever really considered the power of forgiveness, and the strength required to let go of times past for the benefit of the presence? Frieda Wong (p. 8), in a very personal chronicle, tells of her own journey,

As many of you will already be aware, 2017 is a Mensa International election year. As advertised in earlier issues of the MWJ, several of the ExComm committee positions are up for (re-)election, and a number of other positions and committees are also open for appointment. Are you interested in serving Mensa International in an appointed position? Read more on p. 3 and apply!

Karin W. Tikkanen
mwjeditor@mensa.org

Editorial Staff
Editor: Ms Karin W. Tikkanen (mwjeditor@mensa.org)
Science: Mr John Blinke (johnb44221@cs.com)
Books: Mr Hal Swindall (mwjreviews@gmail.com)
Puzzles: Ms Therese Moodie-Bloom (tmb@ozemail.com.au)
Features: Ms Linda Roach (linda.roach@nasw.org)

Mensa International Positions/Committees Open for Appointment in 2017

If you are interested in serving Mensa International in an appointed position, now is your opportunity to apply. These positions are open to all members worldwide. All are for terms of two years (unless otherwise stated), the term commencing after the IBD meeting in France in October 2017.

The following International positions/committees are due to be appointed in 2017:

- **Constitutional Review Officer**
- **International Ombudsman** (3-year term)
- **International Supervisory Psychologist** (Qualifications required/3-year term)
- **Awards Committee member** (Mensa International chair and past chair are members ex officio)
- **Licensing Advisory Committee**: *members* and *chair*
- **Web Board**: *members* and *chair*

Members currently serving in a position or committee due to expire in October are requested to reapply if they wish to continue to serve in that role.

The application form is available on the Officers/Appointees page of the members-only section of the Mensa International website at https://www.mensa.org (you must be logged on). Job descriptions for each position are linked to each role/committee. Both form and/or job descriptions are also available from the Mensa International Office by emailing mensainternational@mensa.org or by post to the address given on page 2.

Applications for the above posts, must be received by June 30, 2017 and must be sent to the International Office (mensainternational@mensa.org), copied to the Director of Administration (admin-mil@ mensa.org). Those who apply, whether appointed or not, will have their interest noted for future reference as there may be other ways in which they can help Mensa International.

Therese Moodie-Bloom
Director of Administration

Mensa International on FaceBook

Mensa International - a page for interesting things about Mensa, intelligence and giftedness
https://www.facebook.com/mensainternational/

ExComm Mensa International - a page where members can learn more about Mensa governance and the activity of elected officers
https://www.facebook.com/ExCommMensaInternational/

The FB group - the official members only group
https://www.facebook.com/groups/MensaInternationalOfficial/

MinD-Jahrestreffen. Annual Gathering of Mensa Germany
April 26th - 30th 2017
Regensburg, Germany

Czech Mensa Spring Gathering
May 4th - 8th 2017
Luhacovice, Czech Republic

Mensa Canada's 50th and Canada's 150th anniversary
June 2nd - 4th 2017
Ottawa Canada

Annual Gathering of American Mensa
July 4th - 8th 2017
Hollywood, Florida, United States
More info: http://ag.us.mensa.org

EMAG 2017: European Mensa Annual Gathering
August 2nd - 6th 2017
Barcelona, Spain

Mensa at Cambridge
August 10th - 13th 2017
Queen's College, Cambridge

Annual Gathering of Mensa Switzerland
September 15th - 17th 2017
Geneva, Switzerland

IBD 2017 Meeting of the International Board of Directors
October 5th - 8th 2017
Nice, France

AMG 2017: Asian Mensa Annual Gathering
October 12th - 15th 2017
Gold Coast, Australia
More info: http://amg2017.com

The **X EMAG (2017)** will take place in Barcelona, Spain, from 2nd to 6th of August. Mensa Spain invits you all to join us in the hottest EMAG ever.

We hope that you will enjoy our warm welcome as well as this amazing and inspiring city, together with Mensans from all over the world, our local team and, of course, the organizers.

The nine previous edition were:

2008	Köln, Germany	**2012**	Stockholm, Sweden
2009	Utrecht, Netherlands	**2013**	Bratislava, Slovakia
2010	Prague, Czech Republic	**2014**	Zürich, Switzerland
2011	Paris, France	**2015**	Berlin, Germany
		2016	Kraków, Poland

Our website (https://emag2017.mensa.es/) will soon be open for registration. We also have a Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/emag2017) and a Facebook event (www.facebook.com/events/1746399815597961).

E-mail address: info.emag@mensa.es .

If you want to participate as a lecturer, please write to: lectures.emag@mensa.es.

You have to come... Summer is coming!

SAILA SEPPO *A Mensan Renaissance Woman*

Many Mensans are interested in both the arts and the sciences. However, only a few actually function as both scientists and artists in tandem. One of them is the Finn Saila Seppo, who works full-time as a scientist for the Academy of Finland while sidelining with her own art business. Saila also wears many other hats, including representing the Academy at conferences around the world and recruiting scientists for various posts in Finland, besides holding six patents and the usual publishing and presenting. How she finds time for it all not even she knows; that is the mystery of Renaissance people.

Saila Seppo in her GreenButton studio. Photo: GreenButton Ltd.

Saila was born in Finland in 1959, and was precocious from the beginning. She could speak fluently by age two, and won a national drawing competition while a child as well. She read voraciously, and at age 10 ran her own market garden, which was good practice for running an art business much later in her life. In secondary school, Saila took all the electives she could. One was needlework, and she soon learned to make her own clothes. In high school, she became so good at mathematics, a subject she loved, that she gave private lessons to her schoolmates, and even taught her teacher a thing or two!

Saila's university career was also distinguished. She studied in the chemistry department of a technology university, but took many physics courses, too. In the physics department she met her future husband, with whom she later had three sons. After graduation, she worked in industrial management rather than continuing in academia, but was persuaded to do thesis research part-time; she inevitably garnered an MSc, a Licentiate in Technology and a PhD in chemistry some years later. That Saila did all this holding down an industrial management position and raising three boys, plus developing her art interests, attests to her meriting the title of Renaissance woman.

Saila's life has not been without its downsides, however. For one thing, she has faced some bias as a woman in the male-dominated world of science and industry. But the greatest challenge Saila faced was from one of her sons suffering from Asperger's syndrome, which put her through an ordeal that is still ongoing, although the worst of it is past. She recorded her conundrum in a semi-fictional memoir entitled Under Glass: A Life with Asperger Syndrome, published in 2014 by her art company Greenbutton (reviewed in the February 2017 issue of the MWJ).

It is for her accomplishments with Greenbutton that Saila really deserves the title Renaissance woman. For her signature works, she uses a material made from tree cellulose that she is patenting to create flowers, plates and bowls, jewelry and above all her "Sisu dolls," which are named after the Finnish word for showing grit and endurance. These tiny figurines are not only cute, but also useful: they can be fashioned into key chains, refrigerator magnets, worn around the neck and more. Saila is now developing a Sisu Land, in which she can have her dolls live and go on adventures. She tries to market her work in markets and exhibitions worldwide, and is developing a clientele.

Since many non-Mensans believe Mensans only do puzzles or are computer geeks, Saila Seppo is a fine example of a multitalented Mensan who has accomplished real things to benefit humanity, both scientifically and aesthetically.

By: Hal Swindall

HENRIK NEUBAUER
- *doctor, dancer and opera historian*

Dr. Henrik Neubauer ranks as one of the oldest Mensans in Europe. A doctor, dancer, dance and ballet historian, opera director, choreographer and university professor, he remains an exceptional polymath. At the age of 87, Dr. Neubauer is living proof that age is not an obstacle to carry on an important and fruitful work.

Dr Neubauer was born in 1929, and grew up in a rural village. His father was the director of a sanatorium for tuberculosis situated in the surroundings. He went to highschool in Ljubljana, where he lived with his grandparents, until the rest of his family moved to the city at the start of the World War II. The city home was just opposite the dramatic theatre, so Neubauer took to visiting plays, as well as operas and operettas performed in a building nearby. At that time he had already begun taking classes at a private ballet school, and in Ljubljana he continued at a newly opened school linked to the theatre, and eventually became a member of the ballet ensemble of the Ljubljana Opera.

After graduation from high school Neubauer took an interest in mathematics. His first choice was however diplomacy:

"I was however told that for the diplomatic school I should join the communist party and therefore I gave it up."

Because of this delay in deciding about his future, he missed all the inscription deadlines except for medicine. Medicine was a calling in the family – his grandfather and father were physicians, and his sister and brother both studied medicine, so he decided to join in the family footsteps.

All the while he continued dancing ballet, and later on continued as a choreographer and opera director:

"It was a natural evolution that has given me satisfaction. In between these jobs I worked as a physician and assistant at the medical faculty and that was as exciting. Later on I also became ballet director, artistic director of Opera and professor at the Music Academy."

"People longed for theatre, especially for opera to forget at least for a couple of hours all the cruelty and inhumanity of everyday life before they had to return to the sad reality."

At the Music Academy, Dr. Neubauer has worked extensively with the history of ballet. Among other things, he has written a book about the Ljubljana Opera during the World War II. The creativity of the opera (and ballet) art in the occupied city was a miracle, he says.

"It bloomed as never again after the war. People longed for theatre, especially for opera to forget at least for a couple of hours all the cruelty and inhumanity of everyday life before they had to return to the sad reality."

"Always do everything with eagerness and with an open heart, and enjoy every moment of the career."

Given his wide range of professions, one may wonder which one has given him the most satisfaction, but on this Dr. Neubauer remains firmly indecisive:

"I like all of them. Medicine as well as arts, and all the others. I have enjoyed all places I've worked at, and I always tried to give the most of myself. For me each job was like a tool that I used to show my possible abilities."

Arts however remain closest to his heart, and after a long and eventful life his one remaining dream is to continue to work in the theatre.

Dr. Neubauer believes in mandatory education in arts to all school children. He finds that the school curriculum does not include art at all or with not enough hours per week, and he says that parents ought to encourage their children to attend such things as the ballet and the opera. At the same time he advocates the benefits of teaching children the value of getting an education for a suitable job, in which they will be happy.

"During my university career I tried to help my students and therefore I have written books on behaviour and period movement, about character and historic dances, stage acting, choreography and theatrical fencing. My opinion also is that youngsters should learn languages, what will be later a great help in their live."

Considering his long life of wide-ranging potential, Dr. Neubauer encountered Mensa rather late in life. In 1989, at the age of 61, he read about IQ-testing in a

newspaper, and out of curiosity decided to go to the test to see what it was like, together with his 12-year old son (at that time there was no age limit).

"We were both surprised when we were notified that we got high notes; my son 156 and I myself 158 out of 160. We were invited to join Mensa Yugoslavia and went to the first meeting in Zagreb, Croatia."

Mensa, Dr. Neubauer says, has given him self-confidence, information on what is happening at the international and national levels, and also contacts.

Dr. Neubauer's parting advice to eager students of music and the related arts is to commit oneself to the joy of the moment:

"Always do everything with eagerness and with an open heart, and enjoy every moment of your career."

This article is based on an interview conducted by Ms Carmen de Celis, first published by *Omnia*, the Mensa Magazine of Mensa Spain, in October 2015. Revision: Karin W. Tikkanen. Photo: Jaka Gasar.

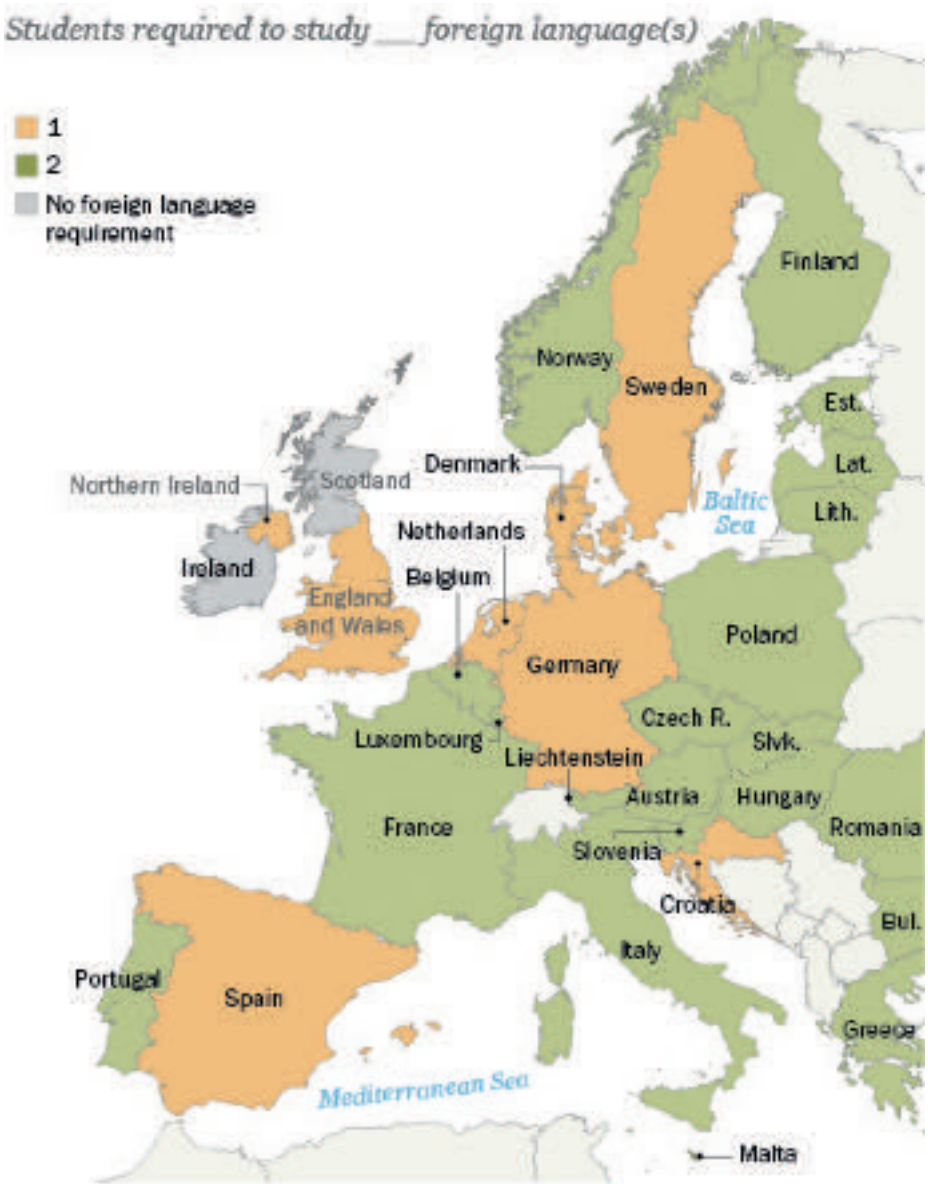
Learning a Foreign Language

~ *Speaking More Than One Language May Slow The Aging Process In The Mind*

A recent study in the Annals of Neurology shows that learning a second language may help slow cognitive decline. Among the psychological and scientific communities there has been an ever-increasing support for the benefits of knowing two or more languages, being bilingual or polyglot. Another study shows that one can reap benefits even when older: learning a foreign language later in life is a "cognitive gift" for the aging brain.

A person who speaks two or more languages is generally considered more intelligent than his monolingual counterpart. But the bilingual and the polyglot follow a different intellectual pattern than most. Perhaps she or he is smarter to begin with? An explanation may be that those who learn an extra language perform better in cognitive tests (even when in their 70s) than might be thought, indicating that the extra language itself is beneficial. The scientific community is proving that the brains of bilinguals and polyglots are quicker and nimbler than once thought, and are more able to deal with conflicts common later in life, including the onset of Alzheimer's Disease (1). A link between bilinguals, polyglots and the general intelligence factor (*g*) of the human brain seems to be a reality. Of course, learning a new language, like any endeavor of this or a similar type, requires a high degree of interest, study, practice, and dedication.

Whether you learn a second language at school, at university, at work or in marriage to a person from a different



Foreign language study requirements in Europe. Source: Pew Research Centre.

linguistic community, a vocabulary of 2000 words is normally sufficient, and non-native fluency or even a "basic" understanding of the language is usually more than enough to live in the community whose language you are speaking. To function in an international community where the main language of communication is not your mother tongue may however require some

greater effort, and in several countries in for example Europe learning a second or third language at school remains mandatory (see map). The results of one study however say that polyglotism may be an inherited skill. When researchers studied the brain of the famous polyglot Emil Krebs, they discovered that in the Broca's Area in the brains of bilinguals and polyglots, the linguistic capabilities functioned differently than those of monolinguals (2).

Learning another language is always a viable and effective way of strengthening the brain, increasing one's intelligence (not necessarily one's "IQ") by keeping the mind active and, during the aging process, its slows the onset of Alzheimer's or stops it dead in its nefarious path. Bilinguals and polyglots of any age can steadily improve their cognitive functioning and skills and overall "brain power." People who speak or are studying a new language can increase brain size and neural connectivity. During research of the process of learning a new language, MRI studies proved that the size of the brain increases as does the "language center" and hippocampus (the area responsible for forming, storing and retrieving our memories). The more languages you speak the better off your cognitive state; and working memory improves, as does memorization.

As a person who speaks several languages with varying levels of fluency, I find the learning process fun and rewarding. Inevitably the moment will come while you are on vacation or "at home", when a native speaker of your new language asks you a question or smiles and invites you to coffee and a chat; you suddenly realize that not only do you understand what your new friend is saying, but you can answer him or her clearly and correctly. S/he understands you. Now that is a real feeling of accomplishment. You have opened your one world into two.

By: Thomas J Hally

References:

(1) *Science Daily*. "Science News." Tel Aviv University. May 8 2008.
(2) *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Broca's area is the area located in the frontal part of the left hemisphere of the brain, and plays a vital role in the generation of human speech. It was discovered in 1861 by the French surgeon Paul Broca.

... WILD JOURNEYS ...

I recently returned from a trip to Brisbane, Australia, spending the thirteen-plus hours in-flight watching movies on a small screen. First up in my binge-watching was "Wild" in which actor-producer Reese Witherspoon portrays writer Cheryl Strayed, an inexperienced hiker who sets out on a solo 1,100-mile hike along the Pacific Crest Trail on America's west coast. As an experienced traveler, I was gobsmacked when she finished her three-month trek with just twenty cents on her person (and absent a few toenails), having fended off a perv or two, some rattlesnakes, and a slew of cringe-worthy flashbacks along the way.

I couldn't help but compare "Wild" to "Eat, Pray, Love," the popular novel and film that prompted a recent flood of soul-searching women to follow in Elizabeth Gilbert's footsteps and seek enlightenment supported by a good cappuccino and a side of beefcake. While both women bucked societal convention as they embarked on their epic journeys into that dark night of the soul, Gilbert's quest was marked by struggles in her spiritual pursuits throughout Italy, India and Indonesia before finally meeting and marrying (and later leaving) Mr. Right. By contrast, Strayed's penny-pinching odyssey led her to that zero-point field of consciousness where some believe space-time dissolves and the universal energy field opens up, allowing the process of healing to occur.

And aren't we all on a pilgrimage of sorts?

My wildest travels never involved a trip to an ashram or a visit to a Balinese medicine man. Nor did I hump a heap of baggage over a punishing mountain range. While I have crossed many places off my bucket list, there was something I was still seeking – something that is probably the toughest thing in life to do ... which is ... wait for it ... to forgive.

Learning to forgive meant traveling where my mind had not gone before – into a series of bold, inner journeys, right here in my home city, assisted by a respected shamanic practitioner and other experts in subtle-energy modalities to help excavate long-buried issues from my consciousness and release them from my energy field.

Whoa! Shamanism? Auras? Akashic records? This skeptical, left-brain-oriented, card-carrying member of Mensa took a quantum leap of faith and was knocked back on her ass. Several times. The process of forgiveness was profoundly self-illuminating, deeply cathartic and surprisingly fast. It also taught me humility and about the many planes of existence beyond the physical as time is not linear and consciousness extends beyond the mind.

On the last day of my trip to Brisbane, I visited the Roma Street Parklands where a bronze statue of Mahatma Gandhi resides. The left side of the statue's base is inscribed with one of Gandhi's famous quotes: "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

Eat, pray, love.
Hike, pray, love.
Forgive, pray, love.

Perhaps they're all the same wild journey.

Yes, you can get there from here – no passport or backpack required. And still keep all of your toenails.

By: Frieda Wong

Intelligence May Stem From a Basic Algorithm in the Human Brain

The human is the most sophisticated organ in the human body. The things that the brain can do, and how it does them, have even inspired a model of artificial intelligence (AI). Now, a recent study published in the journal Frontiers in Systems Neuroscience shows how human intelligence may be a product of a basic algorithm.

This algorithm is found in the Theory of Connectivity, a "relatively simple mathematical logic underlies our complex brain computations," according to researcher and author Joe Tsien, neuroscientist at the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University, co-director of the Augusta University Brain and Behavior Discovery Institute and Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar in Cognitive and Systems Neurobiology. He first proposed the theory in October 2015.

Basically, it's a theory about how the acquisition of knowledge, as well as our ability to generalize and draw conclusions from them, is a function of billions of neurons assembling and aligning. "We present evidence that the brain may operate on an amazingly simple mathematical logic," Tsien said.

THE BRAIN'S FORMULA

The theory describes how groups of similar neurons form a complexity of cliques to handle basic ideas or information. These groups cluster into functional connectivity motifs (FCM), which handles every possible combinations of ideas. More

cliques are involved in more complex thoughts.

In order to test it, Tsien and his team monitored and documented how the algorithm works in seven different brain regions, each involved in handling basics like food and fear in mice and hamsters. The algorithm represented how many cliques are necessary for an FCM, a power-of-two-based permutation logic (N=2i–1), according to the study.

They gave the animals various combinations of four different foods (rodent biscuits, pellets, rice, and milk). Using electrodes placed at specific areas of the brain, they were able to "listen" to the neurons' response. The scientists were able to identify all 15 different combinations of neurons or cliques that responded to the assortment of food combinations, as the Theory of Connectivity would predict. Furthermore, these neural cliques seem prewired in the brain, as they appeared immediately as soon as the food choices did.

If the intelligence in the human brain, in all its complexity, can be summed up by a particular algorithm, imagine what it means for AI. It is possible, then, for the same algorithm to be applied to how AI neural networks work, as these already mimic the brain's structural wiring.

Reprinted from futurism.com.

Will you be the master of your fate? Mensa at Cambridge 2017

August 10-13 2017.
Queen's College, Cambridge.

"I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." So wrote William Ernest Henley in his short but powerful poem Invictus.

Mensa at Cambridge 2017 will look at the various aspects of 'invictus' or 'undefeated', considering questions such as what makes it possible for some people to come out triumphant over events that have assailed them.

More details to come.

Queen's College, Cambridge. Photo: Cantab12. CC-BY-SA-3.0.

Weather from Space

NOAA National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS), November 30, 2016. "GOES-R Has Become GOES-16."

NOAA Weather satellite, GOES-R was successfully into geosynchronous orbit on November 19, 2016 and its name was changed to GOES 16 as soon as it was safely there. GOES- S, T, and U will follow over the next several years as each is completed. These satellites record data about cloud cover and water vapor among other things to enable more accurate weather prediction. The new series of GOES satellites will provide information at four times the resolution of the old ones they are replacing and will cover many more frequency bands. GOES 16 will include a lightning mapper — the first to be used in geosynchronous orbit. This will be a great aid in tornado forecasting because a spike in cloud-to-cloud lightning often occurs right before a visible funnel cloud forms. The true number of lightning flashes is not usually apparent on the ground because clouds get in the way. So it should reduce unnecessary tornado warnings.

The Secret Chernobyl

New Scientist, December 10, 2016. "Exclusive: First Visit to Russia's Secret Nuclear Disaster Site."

The Soviet Union suffered a disastrous explosion in 1957 at its secret Mayak plutonium manufacturing site. But the worst thing was not the explosion. It was the long term contamination of the Techa River beginning in 1949. Twenty-two nearby villages were evacuated without explanation in the first two years. The entire flood plain became contaminated, as well as the river bed and ground water. As at Chernobyl, Elk living there do just fine today. But burrowing voles suffer genetic anomalies. The place has become an unintentional laboratory for long term radiation exposure in humans.

My Generation

ScienceDaily, January 3, 2017. "Stuttering Linked to Reduced Blood Flow in Area of Brain Associated With Language." (Human Brain Mapping, December 30)

Why do people stutter? Researchers at Children's Hospital Los Angeles have found that stuttering is associated with reduced blood flow to the speech processing areas of the brain. Poor blood flow correlated with more severe stuttering. This applies to both children and adults. Even though this connection may have been suspected, this is the first time researchers have PET imaging to prove it.

Dino Color

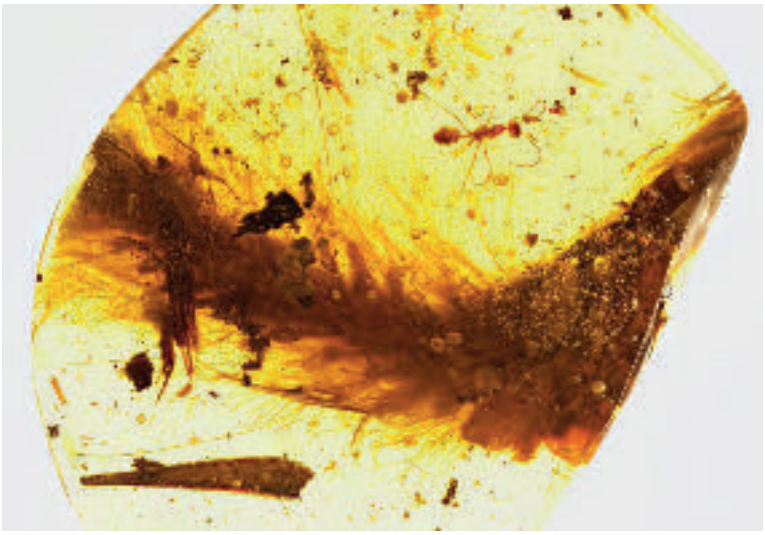
Science News, December 24, 2016, p. 15. "Cretaceous Bird Find Holds New Color Clue." (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, November 21, 2016)

What colors were the dinosaurs? Bones don't keep any color clues. But feathers sometimes do. So, a 130 million year old feathered dinosaur named Eoconfuciusornis might contribute to the debate. It contains color carrying melanosomes embedded in keratin, a stringy protein that could have been part of the feathers. In the past, other scientists have argued that melanosomes in fossils could have belonged to microbes. But if that was the case here, they would have to explain how the microbes were embedded in keratin.

Tail Feathers

National Geographic, December 8, 2016. "Dinosaur Tail Feathers Encased In Amber May Hold Jurassic Secrets."

It is exciting to find feathers trapped in 99 million year old amber. But you don't know if they are dinosaur feathers unless there is part of a dinosaur trapped with them. This is exactly what scientists from China University of Geosciences found at a Myanmar amber market. The find is the tip of a flexible, finely feathered dinosaur tail with some vertebrae included. The creature the tail once belonged to must have been the size of a sparrow, but it was not a bird because the vertebrae were not fused together. The fossil feathers lack the stiff central shaft seen in modern feathers, so these were probably for warmth rather than flight.



Feathered dinosaur tail embedded in amber.
Photo: R. C. McKellar, Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

X-rated

NASA News Release 17-002, January 3, 2017. "NASA Selects Mission to Study Black Holes, Cosmic X-ray Mysteries."

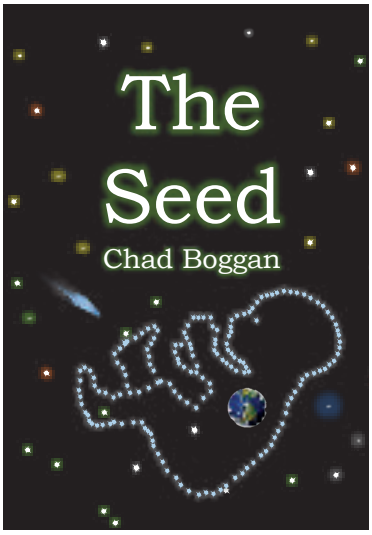
NASA will launch an Explorer class (low budget) space mission to study polarized radiation associated with violent objects like black holes. Although we cannot see into a black hole, we can study the material around it. Polarized radiation from that stuff can tell us a lot. The Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE) mission should cost $188 million including launch and ground support. It will take off in 2020 and it will carry three telescopes that can see cosmic x-rays.

Alan D. Thompson. *Bright: Seeing Superstars, Listening to Their Worlds, and Moving Out of the Way*. CreateSpace, 2016. 250 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1-5116-8464-4.

This is a guide to helping parents, teachers and counselors deal with very intelligent children as they grow up. What to do with precocious youngsters has always been a puzzle, and many volumes have been published about it. Thompson's advice is unique, and summarized in his title: he almost seems to believe the parents should dedicate their lives to fostering their child's brilliance! Thompson opines that recognizing brightness in a child is the first step for those whose job it is to foster that quality. Specifically, he uses Dabrowski's five "supersensitivities" – psychomotor, sensual, imaginational, intellectual and emotional – to describe how highly bright children behave. More controversially, Thompson asserts the Flynn Effect, i.e. that each new generation is smarter on average than the previous one. On the other hand, he cautions that exceptional intelligence does not guarantee high performance, so he advocates much attention and resources be expended on a bright child to reach full potential. Arguing about how to define brightness and nurture it will probably never end, but this book might help Mensan parents trying to raise children who achieve goals.

Sofia Mouritsen. *The Secrets and Struggles of Sophomore Year*. Waxhaw, NC: Blurb, 2014. 185 pp. ISBN: 978-1-32-033524-9.

A standard teenage bildungs-roman about protagonist Marla's ordeals as she enters a new high school in a new state as a sophomore. In her first few minutes at Rivendian High, Marla is accosted by "the Queen", Chloe, who strides majestically along wearing a perfect outfit and flanked by two subordinate girls. As the most popular girl in the 10th grade, Chloe tells Marla bluntly that she can help her become a success, or ruin her career — it all depends on whether Marla is appropriately deferential. To Chloe's outrage, Marla rejects her demand that she "commit" to her and her clique, whereupon she becomes Marla's antagonist. However, Marla meets a cute boy named Alan who is on her side, and manages to make some friends of her own sex as well. This enables her to navigate the tangled currents of high school life to become popular in the end. Mouritsen has produced a clearly written narrative that will be appreciated by Mensans who like adolescent literature, or have adolescents of their own who might be encouraged by it.



Chad M. Boggan. *The Seed*. CreateSpace, 2015. 402 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1517249335.

This futuristic sci-fi novel set a few decades from now is based on the theme of a supposedly benign scientific invention that has catastrophic unforeseen consequences. In the early 21st century, nanoscientist Professor Lennear makes an award-winning breakthrough that causes the (female) U.S. president to announce a "new era" to the Washington press corps. The breakthrough results in fully independent artificial intelligence, and the novel's plot traces its results, both good and bad. In this respect, The Seed has a basic relation to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, a gothic exploration of what happens when the scientific genie gets out of the bottle. It is not, on the other hand, a horror story, but it does depict some of the fallout of enabling people to develop their intelligence to stratospheric levels. Therefore, Boggan's tale will primarily interest Mensans concerned about the promise and pitfalls of AI. It is very clearly written in familiar register, i.e. Boggan uses "could've" and "didn't" in his narration instead of "could have" and "did not". The setting is mostly America's west coast, but there is a trip to the moon for the three main characters.

All books reviewed in this column are by Mensan authors, and all reviews are made by Mr Hal Swindall. Send your book for review to **mwjreviews@gmail.com**. You must be a member in good standing; please include your membership number and national Mensa in all correspondence with Hal.

New words

Susan Watkin

Susan Watkin writes about new words added to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in 2016. Reprinted (selection) from the UK Mensa Magazine January 2017.

Anyroad: In May 2016 we looked at some of the words used by our magazine editor Brian Page in his book *Somewhere Up North*. One of the words was anyroad, a Northern and Midlands word meaning "anyway". In the March 2016 update of the OED **anyroad** was upgraded from a subentry of road to a full entry.

Bracketology: The use of brackets to indicate words known, or thought to be missing, from a piece of text. Also a method of predicting the participants, and winners, of a baseball tournament. The earliest spelling of *bracket* in English was *bragget*, probably from the French *braguette* or Italian *bragueta*, both meaning "codpiece" (the item of clothing, not part of a fish!). Early meanings of *bracket* in English included a ledge or shelf. Bracket, the punctuation mark, dates from the mid 18th Century – an earlier name was a *crotchet*, from the French *crochet* ("hook").

Cliché-verre: An artistic technique, similar to making a print from a photographic negative, but using a handmade negative. *Cliché* is from the French *clicher*, a stereotype or plate used for making prints, and probably imitates the sound of the printing process. *Verre* is the French for glass. Cliché, the oft-repeated expression, is the same word – an expression used time and time again, as though produced from a printing press.

Dahlesque: In September 2016 words were added to the OED, or updated, to mark the centenary of the birth of Roald Dahl. *Dahlesque* has been in use since about 1983. *Human bean* (a mispronunciation of *human being*, and mentioned by Roald Dahl in *The BFG* (1982)) was first used in Punch in 1842. Roald Dahl wrote about "strange and scrumptious dishes" in *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), using scrumptious in its modern sense. The earliest recorded use of *scrumptious* in the OED is in Edward Moor's *Suffolk Words and Phrases* (1823): "Skrumshus, skrewing, stingy, in an avaricious sense. I never heard this word. It was furnished to me by a friend."

Kegerator: A small fridge designed to hold a keg of beer. *Keg* is from the Old Norse *kaggi*, and perhaps related to the Dutch *kaag* ("fishing boat").

Phablet: A blend of phone and tablet - in use in Australia in 2010.

Slacktivism: In use since the mid 1990s – something that requires little effort, such as signing an on-line petition.

Stupid o'clock, silly o'clock: An inconveniently early or late time of day. And not yet in the OED - yawn o'clock.

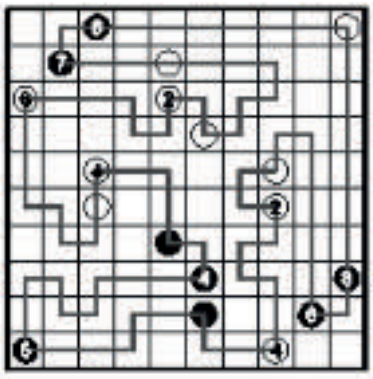
Vlog: *Blog* (from the slightly earlier *weblog*) was in use by the late 1990s. *Vlog* is from *video blog* (in use by 2000).

Solutions to puzzles in previous issues

Solutions to the Capital Punishment Quiz (January 2017 issue)

1) moose + cow = *Moscow*
2) stork + ohm = *Stockholm*
3) anchor + ra = *Ankara*
4) beg + dead = *Baghdad*
5) tree + polly = *Tripoli*
6) jar + Carter = *Jakarta*
7) key + galley = *Kigali*
8) czar + grape = *Zagreb*
9) washing + turn + dizzy = *Washington DC*
10) koala + loom + pour = *Kuala Lumpur*
11) night + roe + bee = *Nairobi*
12) saint + marry + no = *San Marino*
13) knee + core + shear = *Nicosia*
14) moon + tea + video = *Montevideo*
15) hell + sink + key = *Helsinki*
16) priest + Tina = *Pristina*

Solution to the Balance Loop puzzle (February 2017 issue)



You can access earlier issues of the *MWJ*, as well as several national Mensa magazines, at: https://www.mensa.org/publications.