**MARCH 2021**

# Head-Line

**The Newsletter of Mid-Michigan Mensa Number 563**



# HEAD-LINE NO. 563 MARCH 2021
# MID-MICHIGAN MENSA

**Region 3 Vice-Chairman: John Voymas**
**Email:** RVC3@us.mensa.org

## STEERING COMMITTEE (ELECTED BOARD)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Loc Sec:** | Robert Henderson | 517-676-3369 | rlhenderson@peoplepc.com |
| **Vice Loc Sec**: | Elizabeth Evangelista | 517-351-3645 | evangel6@comcast.net |
| **Scribe:** | Wendy Carnegie | 517-775-0648 | w.carnegie@comcast.net |
| | Sharon Plavnick | 517-285-8740 | sharonslp@ameritech.net |
| | John Garrison | 517-349-7313 | MidMIMensa@aol.com |
| | Squire Jaros | 517-775-4833 | IIahcrsamc@aol.com |

## APPOINTED OFFICERS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Dues Sub. Adm:** | Elizabeth Evangelista | 517-351-3645 | evangel6@comcast.net |
| **Gifted Youth Coord:** | | | |
| **Membership:** | John Garrison | 517-349-7313 | MidMIMensa@aol.com |
| **Ombudsman:** | John Rooney | 517-980-2657 | rooneyjack312@gmail.com |
| **Proctor:** | John Garrison | 517-349-7313 | MidMIMensa@aol.com |
| **Program Director** | Elizabeth Evangelista | 517-351-3645 | evangel6@comcast.net |
| **Scholarship:** | | | |
| **SIGHT Coord:** | Dee Becker | 517-349-3292 | deebecker@sbcglobal.net |
| **Treasurer:** | Robert Henderson | 517-676-3369 | rlhenderson@peoplepc.com |

## HEAD-LINE EDITOR

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Sharon Plavnick. | 517-285-8740 | sharonslp@ameritech.net |
| Distribution Manager | John Garrison; | 517-349-7313 | MidMIMensa@aol.com |

## WEBMASTER

Robert Henderson 517-676-3369. rlhenderson@peoplepc.com

**MMM WEB SITE: http**:/www.midmichigan.us.mensa.org

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# EDITOR'S COLUMN:

FROM MY BRAIN TO YOURS

by Sharon Plavnick

It seems like conversations have shifted to the Vaccination Channel much of the time.

Who got their first one?
Who got their second one?
Who is still waiting impatiently?
Who is on the fence about getting it?
Who is never getting it?

That's the nature of conversations with my neighbors here in Florida, and with friends back home in Michigan, and I imagine all over the world.

For the record, Lynn and I got our first Moderna shot on February 10th, and by the time you all are reading this, we should be scheduled for our second. When we left home in late December, I was trending much more on the wait-and-see side of things. I didn't think we'd get our turn until we got home in April anyway, so no rush. But once the actual process started, I found that I wanted any possible protection the vaccine could offer sooner rather than later. We put ourselves on whatever county lists were within a reasonable driving distance here in Florida, and we were pleased to score a mid-February success.

Sure hope whoever wants one already has it, or will get it soon. Sure hope it does give us a high degree of protection. Sure hope life can return to some semblance of normal some time this year…or next…or… sometime.

What about all of you? If you want to respond to anything you read in this issue, send it along to me at: sharonslp@ameritech.net

# LOC SEC COLUMN

## Bob's Two Bits for March 2021

by Robert Henderson, Loc Sec

As a former NASA employee and current Planetary Society member, I will admit to being biased in favor of space exploration, but as a Mensan I'm sure that my love of knowledge and new additions to it are broadly shared. Humans have long wondered how we got here, whether we are alone in the Universe, and whether there is a larger purpose to it all. Like nature, the human mind abhors a vacuum, so myths and legends have arisen to fill the gaps in our knowledge. Serious study at the margins of those gaps has filled large parts of them, but the myths and legends live on. . . Perhaps we should consider retiring those that have outlived their usefulness.

I'm writing this after watching NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory pull the biggest rabbit out of their hat yet: successfully landing the Perseverance rover with its Ingenuity "Marscopter" on the Red Planet! Mars is too far from Earth to allow human remote control, so the lander needed thousands of lines of triple-checked computer code to control its re-entry, descent, and touchdown. It even chose its own landing site on the fly (literally) by comparing the terrain seen by its landing cameras to its internal maps of local topography measured earlier by other spacecraft already in Mars orbit. The mission's goal is to look for evidence of past life on Mars in a site that seems relatively likely to have it based on local landforms. If it finds such evidence, we may have to rethink our place in the cosmos.

Many people question whether all the money and effort we spend on space exploration could be better used to meet pressing human needs, but this is a disingenuous false dichotomy. NASA's budget is something under half of 1% of U.S. government spending, whereas military spending reductions or billionaire taxation rates similar to those in effect after WWII could easily generate enough funds to eliminate infectious diseases, poverty, and child hunger nationwide. It's just a matter of putting people over profits on our national list of priorities. Hopefully our new president and Congress will listen and act to address our nation's most pressing needs.

If you are ever tempted to suspect that scientists are pursuing a hidden agenda or doing the bidding of secretive cabals, keep in mind that there

are plenty of rich and powerful people who feel threatened by the truths that scientists uncover. They have a vested interest in discrediting those facts, the scientists who discover them, and even the scientific method itself. Think instead of the centuries of painstaking inquiry that have taught us the natural principles underlying such marvels of modern technology as the Internet, your smartphone, and vaccines to prevent disease. . . not to mention the robotic exploration of our solar system!

Ginny and I each received our second shot of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine this morning, and my Facebook feed is full of reports from friends (including several MMM members) that they are also getting vaccinated. At some point this pandemic will die out and/or enough of us will have been vaccinated to reduce the COVID-19 threat to the level of background noise. Based on current trends, we may be able to resume scheduling MMM's TGIF dinners as early as this April! Let's discuss the relevant pros and cons on the MMM Facebook page and reach agreement in time to put the dates and venues in next month's Head-Line. Hope to hear your thoughts!

Best wishes,
Bob Henderson

## RVC 3 March, 2021 Column

John Voymas

Looks like this year's American Mensa election has multiple candidates for many offices. There are two candidates for Chair: LaRae Bakerink and TImmy King. Two candidates have qualified for First VIce Chair: Peter DuDeck and Lori Norris. Both of those positions will be decided on the first ballot round. The Second Vice Chair choice will be among four candidates: Antonio (Tony) Belarmino, Angela Christie, David McCallister, and Robert Salkin. This will likely take two or three rounds of balloting. American Mensa uses a method called preferential voting (also known as ranked-choice voting). When you vote for Second Vice Chair, you will indicate your preference of candidate and rank them from 1 (first choice) to 4 (last choice). You do not have to rank all four - you could just put 1 by your first choice and 2 by your second choice and stop there. If no candidate gets over 50% of the vote, the fourth place candidate's ranked votes will be distributed to the other three candidates based on the ranking of the other three candidates on ballots which chose the

fourth candidate as their first choice. This method saves time and money by only having a single ballot which can be used for runoffs when no single candidate gets a majority of the votes.

The choice for Treasurer is between Taz Criss and James Winschel III. There is only one candidate for Secretary, Ian Randal Strock, so he will be declared the new Secretary. Ian is the current RVC for Region 1. In Region 3, the only candidate who received the required minimum of 100 nominating signatures was Lora Mitchell, so Lora will be taking over this column on July 1. Lora is the current Communications Officer.

There is one proposed Bylaws Amendment that will be on the ballot. Currently, elected AMC terms are for two years. The proposed amendment is to change that to terms of three years. Look for pros and cons in an upcoming Mensa Bulletin.

Since the voting period runs from April 15 to May 15, you will have several weeks to "meet the candidates" and to learn what they plan to contribute to American Mensa should they be the chosen one. You will find them on various Facebook groups as well as in the Mensa Connect Communities. Some will be coming to upcoming Regional Gatherings (RGs) in the next few weeks. I will be hosting a "Meet the Candidates" Zoom meeting in early April. More information on that will be in my April article. I will also be posing the date to the Region 3 Mensa Connect Community. Be sure to check there after March 1.

The next RG will be in March. Dayton Area Mensa will be having their RG March 26 - 28. This will be a virtual RG. Details should be available on the national calendar of events, the Dayton Area Mensa Facebook page, and the Dayton Area Mensa webpage.

The next American Mensa AMC meeting is set for March 20. This will be virtual and is open to all members of American Mensa. For more info https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/entries/amc-meeting-spring-2021/.

I'll be seeing some of you in real life over the next few months. Until then ... Cheers!

# PUZZLES

submitted by Bob Henderson

## PUZZLE:

Say Brian and Brianna each have some coins, but Brian has one less coin than Brianna does. Both of them toss all their coins simultaneously and count the number of heads. What is the probability that Brianna has more heads than Brian?

See answer on page 6.

## Bob's Word Ladder Puzzle

Starting at the first word in each pair, change one letter at a time to make the second word. How many steps do you need?

Change HATE to LOVE in 3 to 5 steps
Change FAIL to PASS in 3 to 7 steps
Change DULL to WISE in 4 to 6 steps
Change MEAN to KIND in 4 to 6 steps
Change SLOW to FAST in 5 to 9 steps
Change SORRY to HAPPY in 5 to 9 steps
Change GRIEF to CHEER in 7 to 9 steps
Change STALE to FRESH in 8 to 11 steps
Change IDLE to BUSY in 8 to 12 steps
Change DRUNK to SOBER in 10 to 18 steps

# MARCH 2021 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

**John Garrison, Membership Chair**
**120 Members**

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

2 Jeffrey Buchhop
4 Eric Lager
18 Steven Spitzley
26 Frank Dolinar
5 David Brown
17 Eric Sanco
26 Thomas Korkoske

## MARCH MENSAVERSARIES

2 Carol Scot
5 Ian Smith
7 Mason Miller
10 Neal Forss
12 Eric Laverty
15 John Paduch
21 Brinton Butler
46 Elizabeth Evangelista
1 Sheila McCoy
5 Jennifer Foesal
8 Kobe Hexon
11 Kathleen Kohagen
12 Keith Shaw
21 Roberta McCall
26 David Uhrmann

**NO NEW MEMBERS IN OR OUT**

### Puzzle Answer:

They can't have the same numbers of both heads and tails: because Brianna has more coins than Brian, she will have either more heads or more tails than he does. Those two probabilities must be equal because the logic does not depend on which side of the coins they count. Since they cover the only possible outcomes, they must sum to 100%, giving 50% as the answer.

From Marilyn vos Savant's "Ask Marilyn" column in Parade magazine, December 6, 2020.

## PONDER THIS

by John Garrison

This is not meant to be racist. If someone is offended by this question I give you an apology up front. I do not have an answer. I am asking this question because I'm just curious.

In almost every current TV show there are interracial couples. The same goes for the commercials. The same holds true for gay or lesbian couples. My question is:

> Is the media going overboard in an attempt for social equality? I have no idea what the actual percentage of couples in the real world are of mixed race or sexual preference. Does anybody have an answer? As I said earlier, "I'm just curious".

Anyone else? Send your thoughts to John at midmimensa@aol.com or to me at sharonslp@ameritech.net and I'll publish them under John's byline.

## WHAT ARE YOU READING RIGHT NOW?

What's everyone reading these days? I'd like to make this a monthly feature. I don't need an entire book review...just a title and author will do. If you add a sentence or two about it, that would be frosting on the cupcake. I would attach your name to your title unless you tell me you'd prefer to be anonymous in the print version.

I'll go first: I'm currently enmeshed in *Circe*, by Madeline Mill. I didn't know the world needed yet another retelling of Greek Mythology, but it turns out this particular minor goddess has a riveting point of view.

Todd Eldred is working on *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan's Native Americans.* Also *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right.* He says "I read Kurt Anderson's *Evil Geniuses* last fall and this is a great companion to it. Could be I'm becoming a Left-wing conspiracy nut…"

Gordon MacDonald is reading *Interpreter of Maladies*, by Jhumpa Lahiri.

All the rest of you? Let me know at Sharonslp@ameritech.net.
Or join us on Facebook and get the list in advance.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT
## by Barb Ford

Have you ever noticed that many of our sweetest memories revolve around food? I sure have. Recently, my sister, Teena, sent me her recipe for Mushroom Bean and Barley Soup. She first made this for me while I visited her Miami home nearly 40 years ago. It was hearty, flavorful, and certainly memorable. Her recipe came from a vegetarian cookbook published in the 1970's. The original recipe calls for dried lima beans, however, for the sake of ease and prep time, my version calls for fresh or frozen beans. Canned beans can be substituted as well. If you don't like lima beans, any variety will be good in this recipe. I also added celery, because I like it. Make this, and make it your own legendary family recipe.

### MUSHROOM, BEAN AND BARLEY SOUP

**Ingredients:**

1 Large Onion, Diced
3 Cloves Garlic, Minced
1 Cup Celery, Chopped
2 T Butter or Oil
¾ Pound Sliced Mushrooms
5+ Cups Vegetable Broth
2 Cups Fresh or Frozen Lima Beans
1 Cup Pearl Barley
1 Cup Parsley, Chopped
1 Pinch, EACH: Nutmeg, Thyme, Ginger, Ground Clove
Salt and Pepper to Taste

**Directions:**

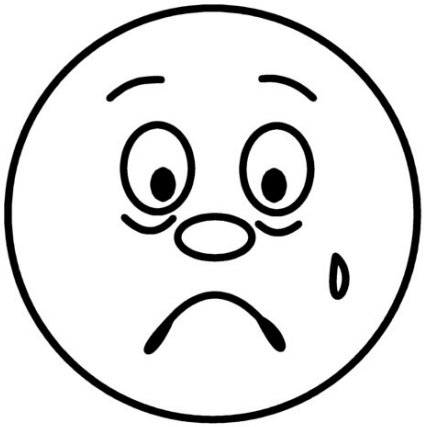
1. In a large pot, sauté onion and garlic in butter until golden.
2. Add mushrooms, reduce heat, cover and cook 10 minutes.
3. Stir in broth and remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer for 1 hour, making sure beans and barley are tender.
   (Extra broth can be added, if desired.)

"The most indispensable ingredient of all good home cooking: love for those you are cooking for."

*Sophia Loren*

# MARCH 2021 CALENDAR

## ALL MMM DINNERS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED TILL FURTHER NOTICE.



**BETTER TIMES ARE COMING**

TGIFs are on Fridays. We meet at about 5:30 PM and order about 5:30 PM but you're welcome at any time. Come and get acquainted. All members and friends are welcome at the events above. Any member may schedule an event. Please remember: **Who**, **What**, **Where**, **When**, and **Why**. The deadline to schedule an event is the **15th of the month before the event**. Contact Ginny Brunke Henderson, Calendar Coord. at: gbrunkh@peoplepc.com or 517-676-3369
Calendar event information can also be found on the Mid-Michigan Mensa website at http://midmichigan.us.mensa.org/calendar.html