JULY 2021

Head-Line

The Newsletter of Mid-Michigan Mensa Number 567



HEAD-LINE NO. 567 JULY 2021
MID-MICHIGAN MENSA

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Head-Line and Calendar items are due by the 15th of the month prior to publication. Camera ready contributions are appreciated, but not necessary. Calendar entries may be emailed, telephoned, or snail-mailed to the Calendar/TGIF Coord. Permission is granted to reprint material from the Head-Line in any Mensa publication, with appropriate credit, unless the material is copyrighted.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN:

FROM MY BRAIN TO YOURS

by Sharon Plavnick

Looks like our intrepid and beloved calendar scheduler has us back to a full round of TGs. Thanks, Ginny. Please note, everyone, that some of the venues are indoors. Each of us has to decide where our own boundary lines are, so plan accordingly. I'm still falling heavily in the deeply cautious zone, and for me that means no inside dining. So I'll see my fellow dining peeps on the patio when it works out. In the meantime, whatever you decide for yourself….Just. Stay. Healthy.

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 July 2021

by Robert Henderson, Loc Sec

After MMM's first successful TGIF dinner of the year on May 14, the attendees agreed that most of us would be comfortable dining in outdoor venues in the future. It was good to see new faces and old friends again in both May and June!

The continued reduction in Michigan COVID-19 cases and increasing vaccination rates have finally made it seem likely that some MMM members will also be comfortable at a few indoor venues in the next month. Accordingly, our Calendar Coordinator has reserved TGIF venues for all five Fridays in July! July 2nd at the Hibachi Grill and July 16th at Delhi Cafe offer indoor dining only, but on July 9th at Lucky's Steak House we have reservations for 14 on their outdoor patio. The venues for July 23rd and 30th may also have outdoor seating available, assuming that the weather cooperates. . . We look forward to seeing more of you in July! Ginny and I also hope to host this year's MMM Summer Anniversary party later in August.

I wish I could say that the threat of COVID is behind us, but parts of the country and most of the world are not that lucky. Cases continue to increase where vaccines are in short supply, so there is always the risk of new variants evolving, some of which may find ways to get around the current vaccines. So far, immunization has been able to effectively minimize both infections and hospitalizations due to COVID variants, especially among the fully vaccinated. This progress could easily be reversed, so watch the MMM Website and Facebook page for possible TGIF cancellations in the event that there is yet another wave of this pandemic. We will not willingly risk the health and lives of our group members by holding events that could possibly spread a more infectious or lethal variant of COVID!

This is a good time to thank everyone who took this health threat seriously, took precautions, and got immunized against it, as well as the health care workers who have given millions of shots and spent long hours caring for the sickest among us. I wish that I had some encouraging words for others of us for whom the pandemic has proceeded unabated. Unfortunately, too many are the casualties of a second pandemic, that of misinformation about COVID-19, beginning with a president who insisted that it was all a "hoax" despite the abundance of clear evidence to the contrary and the many relevant lessons from history. I'm afraid that my words would fall on deaf ears in those of us who seem to have been inoculated against belief in the same evidence and logic that convinced public health officials world-wide to recommend reasonable steps to prevent the spread of airborne viruses such as COVID-19. If you ever doubt whether wearing your mask has done any good, just remind yourself how well you got through this past winter's usual cold and flu season. . . That's my two bits!

PUZZLES

submitted by Bob Henderson

MATH PUZZLE: Cutting the Necklace

Two thieves steal a necklace consisting of 10 rubies and 14 emeralds, fixed in some arbitrary order on a loop of golden string. Show that they can cut the necklace in two places so that when each thief takes one of the resulting pieces, he gets exactly 5 rubies and 7 emeralds.

Bob's Geography Quiz

For each city listed below, can you name the country in which it is located? You win 10 points for each correct answer. Can you get all ten?

1: Alma-Ata
2: Kathmandu
3: Manaus
4: Mandalay
5: Papeete
6: Reykjavik
7: Riyadh
8: Tegucigalpa
9: Timbuktoo
10: Trieste

No cheating! Write down your guesses before you check your answers elsewhere in this issue.

See answers on page 7

JULY 2021 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

John Garrison, Membership Chair
109 Members

JULY BIRTHDAYS

David Murley	7	Kristen Shuler	8
Gary Gordon	12	David Salsbury	17
Byron Williams	28		

JULY MENSAVERSARIES

Wendy Crowley	1	Pamela Benzing	5
Jeremy Fett	17	Daniel Thompson	20
Keith Stewart	20	Eleanor Keating	31
Dawn Ramsay	34	Squire Jaros	41

MEMBERS NEW TO GROUP

Kevin Dyke – Howell

WHAT ARE YOU READING RIGHT NOW?

List curated by Sharon Plavnick

I've been veering away from fiction just a bit to read for professional purposes. It's a new book called ….Speaking for the Dying, by Susan P. Shapiro. The author headed a two year long study of a Chicago ICU to analyze who made decisions for patients in dire conditions. The dynamics between the medical professionals, the family, and the patient influenced who decided and how they decided. As someone who now counsels others and drafts their medical directives to name a patient advocate and to give that advocate guidance on how you want them to decide, I was surprised and disheartened by how readily that document can be ignored, and even more, how the document may dis-serve the patient. This book is not easy reading, but if you are worried about being the patient, or about being the advocate, it is worth borrowing from MELCAT in order to read the pertinent chapters and gain some insight.

From Gordon MacDonald: Just read a fascinating book about a murder mystery set in 1793 Stockholm, "The Wolf and the Watchman".It concerns one of the most sadistic, gruesome, and brutal murders I've ever read. Decidedly not for the squeamish. Very well-written, with a large and well-portrayed cast of characters, related historical events, and many unexpected plot twists. The E-book can be downloaded from Amazon for $1.99, a bargain. 381 pages.

In early June, Chris Williams was reading *Animal Farm;* Elizabeth Evangelista was reading *Caste*, and Bob Barrie was reading *The Three Musketeers.*

So…pile it on me, peeps out there in reading and viewing land. What are you all reading or watching? Drop a sentence or two on me by email or by Facebook messages, or by text. Smoke signals? Carrier pigeon? Call me and leave a voice mail. Something. Anything!!!

Send to me at: sharonslp@ameritech.net; 517-285-8740; Sharon Cutler Plavnick on Facebook. This is so easy…just do it.

PONDER THIS IN JULY

by John Garrison

First, continuing our discussion from the June issue about welfare/ entitlements and what constraints the government ought to use, Christian Hildebrandt sent us a comment on my comment that the "welfare queen" myth of the Reagan era had been debunked. He stated:

> Although I don't agree completely with either of you on the issue of entitlements per se, it is a little disingenuous to say that the story of the Welfare Queen was debunked: http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2013/12/linda_taylor_welfare_queen_ronald_reagan_made_her_a_notorious_american_villain.html
>
> She existed. While Reagan was a talented story-teller and frequently polished the facts for the sake of the story or it's moral, it is nevertheless true that abusers of the system do exist and some are quite successful at it.

My response: Christian's point is well-taken; we all do a disservice to each other when we rely on generalities. I continue to point out that "generally" most people capable of work prefer to work, and when they don't it is "generally" due to reasons beyond their control. Of course there are a fair number of exceptions that can be used anecdotally to support the opposite, but I do think they are a much smaller number overall. There is much to debate about the role of government in providing social safety nets, starting from the initial decision of whether government should be involved at all. If so, the questions change: How much involvement? What is the end goal? How is that end goal evaluated? How do we prevent abuse of the system?

I read an intriguing op-ed in the NYT just this morning, that argues that our system inherently depends on maintaining a poverty-class, and if we wanted to remedy that, instituting a base income would have some merit. I'm pretty sure none of this will get resolved in my lifetime, but it sure does make for some interesting conversation. (https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/13/opinion/stimulus-unemployment-republicans-poverty.html)

Thanks Christian, for adding to the discourse.

July's new Ponder This topic from John Garrison:

I recently read an article about political correctness. We have changed many descriptions such as – Policeman to Police Person to Police Officer, Fireman to Fire Fighter, Mail man to Letter Carrier. Etc. The writer of the article argued that Mother and Father should be changed to Berthing Person and Sperm Donor.

Have we gone too far? When is enough - enough? Your thoughts please.

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.

PUZZLE ANSWERS:

MATH PUZZLE SOLUTION

Imagine the necklace laid out in a circle, with the 24 gems spaced around it. Take a stick whose length is at least the diameter of the circle and lay it across the necklace so that there are 12 gems on each side of the stick. Of course, there may be more rubies on one side than the other; say there are more rubies on the right side of the stick. Rotate the stick counterclockwise by one gem at each crossing; that could change the number of rubies on its right side, but never by more than one ruby. After 11 more such rotations (total: 180 degrees) the stick is back where it was, but now there are more rubies on what was originally its left side. Thus, at some point, exactly half (five) of the rubies were on each side of the stick, and therefore, half the emeralds as well. The thieves then cut the golden string where the stick crossed it.

Geography Quiz ANSWERS:

1: Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan
2: Kathmandu, Nepal
3: Manaus, Brazil
4: Mandalay, Myanmar
5: Papeete, French Polynesia
6: Reykjavik, Iceland
7: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
8: Tegucigalpa, Honduras
9: Timbuktoo, Mali
10: Trieste, Italy

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
By Barb Ford

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FARRO SALAD

Well, summer. Time for outdoor get togethers, and potlucks. My dilemma has long been coming up with a dish to take that both travels well and everyone likes. This recipe works very well, and is also vegetarian. I make it often for myself as it keeps well in the refrigerator for up to a week. It is best made a day or two ahead to ensure the ingredients absorb all the goodness of the dressing. This is a method recipe, so the ingredients will vary by number of servings desired, personal taste and seasonal availability. The star of the show is hearty farro (wheat). It is common in the Mediterranean, and a versatile ingredient in many regional recipes. For this dish, I like to combine at least 50% veggies with 50% cooked farro.

Let's go! Prepare the farro according to the cooking instructions on the package in the amount you desire. Drain and set aside to cool. Chop a variety of colorful vegetables in a medium to small dice. Some of my favorites include: celery, carrot, radish, sweet peppers, asparagus, corn, broccoli and cauliflower florets. Make this as simple or varied as you wish. When including fresh herbs, cucumber, onion and tomatoes, I advise adding them just before serving. To dress this salad, I prepare my own vinaigrette, or in a pinch, will use a good quality store bought Italian dressing. The amount you use will vary with the volume of ingredients. When preparing, the salad should be pretty wet. The farro will absorb a lot. Allow extra dressing, as you will likely need to add more the next day.

Combine all of the ingredients and refrigerate at least overnight. Stir the next day and add salt and pepper to taste. A nice touch is to serve it with feta and olives on the side for folks to add as desired.

It really is easy to be a kitchen star, and enjoy the party too.

"Strange to see how a good dinner and feasting reconciles everybody."

Samuel Pepys

JULY 2021 CALENDAR

Fri. July 2	**TGIF - Hibachi Grill & Sushi Buffet**: 5837 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing, in Delta Center. Large selectin of Oriental foods, with sushi, salad, and dessert buffets. Please wear face covering when not seated.
Fri. July 9	**TGIF - Lucky's Steakhouse:** 3554 Okemos Rd, Okemos, famous for their seafood, steak, and prime rib with all the trimmings. We have reservations for 5:30 in their outdoor seating area. Please wear face covering when not seated.
Fri. July 16	**TGIF Delhi Cafe:** 4625 Willoughby Rd, Holt, between Cedar St and Aurelius Rd. A Mensa favorite with good Greek and American food. We will have a private room with enough space for social distancing. Wear a mask whenever you are not seated.
Fri. July 23	**TGIF - Harrison Roadhouse:** 720 E. Michigan Ave, East Lansing. Good selection of pub-grub, other food, and beers. If the weather cooperates we will ask to be seated outdoors. Face covering requested when not seated.
Fri. July 30	**TGIF - Amer1can Bistro:** 2328 Showtime Dr, Lansing, just north of Eastwood Towne Center. If the weather cooperates we will ask to be seated outdoors. Face covering requested when not seated.

Generally, if you need information, call 517-676-3369 or visit midmichigan.us.mensa.org for updates.

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