



Lumens

Islands Mensa, Mountain Mensa, Vancouver Mensa & Yukon Mensa

Mensa Canada's Western
Region Newsletter

Dec 2007 Jan 2008 Vol 10, Issue 6

Regional Rep Rap

by Dave Stubbs



In spite of the cold and wet conditions at this time of year, Mensa members in Greater Vancouver and Greater Victoria continue to support a variety of regular activities, most of which involve eating. The most successful of these events would appear to be the monthly 'Ted & Diana Powell' Sunday Brunch, which regularly attracts up to 20 or more members and significant others. In large measure, its success can be attributed to the fact that Ted phones each regular attendee two or three days before to remind them (Mensans may be intelligent, but they sure can be forgetful!).

The next meeting of the Mensa Canada National Board will be taking place in mid January. If you have any issues you wished discussed at this meeting, please let me know. Also, just a reminder that the 2008 AGM will be taking place in Quebec City in late June, a wonderful opportunity to combine a sight-seeing trip with a Mensa AGM. ☺

Happy Holidays To All!

Leo's Lot

by Leo Jung



In September, Mensan Lorne Brown showed us how body image, laws, and ethics factor into his practice of Cosmetic and reconstructive surgery. Allison Bachlet in October gave us insight into why she chose Naturopathy vs. UBC med school (allopathy) after her PhD in Gastroenterology as a Rhodes' scholar. :) ☺



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Leo's Speakers Group

There will be no Speaker's Night in December.

Jan 23/08 Dr. Stephan Schwarz "History of Anaesthesiology" a popular talk he gives to med students at UBC

Feb 27/08 Rebecca Temmer "Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" a documentary being shot in England

Mar 26/08 Panel of speakers "Alternative Investments" How does non-traditional investing diversify a portfolio?

Editor's Letter

by Lisa Le Blanc



Well! Top of the season to ya all! The season has descended upon us and the air is rife with frost. Soon there'll be Santa's slipping down chimneys and the ball dropping at Times Square to toast in a new year.

Our New Year will start off with an exciting CBC documentary on *The National* about an incredible accomplishment of Lorrie Williams, this issue's profilee. Peter Mansbridge is hosting a show on the Canadian Harambee Educational Society which was founded by Lorrie. Another amazing mensan with a lot to contribute to society. Keep your eyes peeled for this documentary.

Our Think Tank has met up with a sizeable speedbump. Seems the number of people attending was not sufficient to warrant the size of the room being used, so this month's Think Tank was unavoidably cancelled on short notice. Profuse apologies to any who may have braved the snow to attend, only to find it cancelled. Efforts are underway to find a more suitable location. Any ideas or suggestions are more than welcome.

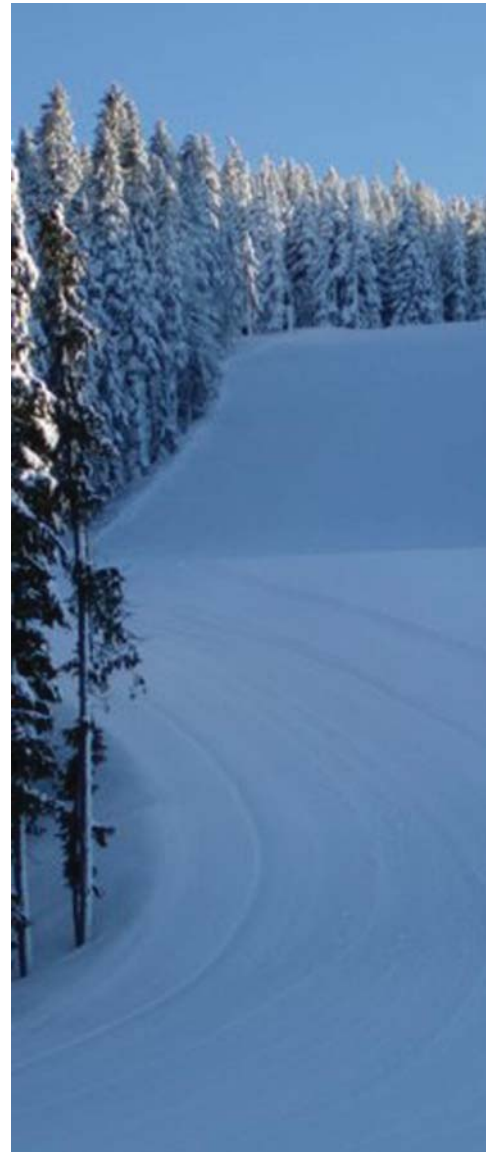
Thanks to our new webmaster Ephy, our new website is up and running. A few bugs to be worked out, maybe, but for those who were wondering, my editor@lumens.ca email is in business now.

Speaking of Ephy, he managed to slip in a nice little Mexican vacation in the midst of webmastering and came home engaged! Congrats to the happy couple.

After six months at sea, our Oceangybe guys have reached their first destination - New Zealand. They plan to be land-lubbers for a bit to do some boat maintenance. Meanwhile, back in snowy Vancouver - Happy Holidays to All.

Please forward submissions to editor@lumens.ca or write to *lumens* with any brainstorm or ideas.

*Looking forward to hearing from you,
Lisa*



Here's another fine mess you've gotten me into...



The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are this year's winners. Read them carefully. Each is an artificial word with only one letter altered to form a real word. Some are terrifically innovative:

Intoxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.

Bozone: The substance surrounding stupid people, that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The Bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.

Cashtration: The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.

Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.

Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

Hipatitis: Terminal coolness.

The Think Tank

by Borce Gyorjievski

BC Yukon Mensa Yahoo Group is now fully operational and under new management. There have been some problems with the "BC Yukon Mensa Yahoo Group" and those of you who tried to join had their request expire after 14 days. The reason was that the previous administrator was not actively involved in the group for some time, but since then I have taken over administering the group, so all future request will be responded to promptly. If you have submitted a request in the previous 6 months, please re-submit it and I will see to it.

Since every yahoo group is BOTH a web bulleting board and e-mailing list, there are two ways to subscribe to the group:

Go to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Mensa_Canada_BC_Yukon and follow instructions or send email to: Mensa_Canada_BC_Yukon-subscribe@yahogroups.com

Questions and Myths:

Myth #1: You must have Yahoo email or ID to subscribe.

No, you don't. If you use the email as described above you can use any email whatsoever. The downside is that you won't be able to use the web features (files, photos, links, polls, etc) of the group, but you will definitely be able to post and receive messages. To use the web features of the group you need to create a Yahoo ID or email.

Myth #2: I will receive too many email messages.

No, you won't. If you subscribe by the web method above, you can select an option 'read messages on the web only', and thus you will receive NO messages whatsoever, but will be able to read the discussion on the groups web page, whenever you want. Another option is to subscribe with the 'daily digest', which will combine all the messages for the day

in one email, thus you will be receive at most one (or none, if there are no messages that day) email per day.

Question #1: Who can join?

All current and former members of Mensa Canada who are currently residing in BC, Yukon, Alberta or NWT. Other mensans should be ok, but I have no way of verifying their membership. The list is not open to the general public.

Question #2: What topics are discussed?

Anything and everything. From current issues, SIGs that you host, changes in times of events, articles, anecdotes, etc. etc. Everything is discussed in a respectful and considerate way.

Connect with friends from any web browser - no download required. Try the new Yahoo! Canada Messenger for the Web BETA at <http://ca.messenger.yahoo.com/webmessengerpromo.php>

That's a good idea, Ollie, tell me that again...

Inoculate: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.

Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.

Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.

Decafalon : The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.

Dopeler Effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

Arachnoleptic Fit: The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.

Beelzebug: Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.

Caterpallor: The color you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

Glibido: All talk and no action.

And the pick of the lot:

Ignoranus: A person who's both stupid and an asshole. ☹



Just Open Wide

by Geraldine Sombke

“Just open wide, I’m going to probe now.”

What a phrase to raise goosebumps, when you’re helpless in the dental hygienist’s chair, lying with your neck tilted too far back, wearing a little towel around your neck, held on with alligator clips.

My hygienist is a lovely person, and my dentist is very nice, but I come from a long line of people who are nervous about dentists.

My father had a full set of upper teeth made for him by the Air Force dentists when he enlisted during World War II. He grew up on a Hudson’s Bay post in the far north, never eating vegetables, only lots of sugar. I used to envy him, thinking how nice it would be to send your teeth in to the dentist to be worked on, skipping the chair for yourself. That was before I watched all those

Fixodent commercials and realized it wasn’t the best solution.

My earliest memories of dentists are of the very infrequent visits of the traveling dentist to the construction camps where I spent my youth. He would come to stay a few weeks and treat all the cavities that had popped up since his last visit.

“Does it hurt?” he’d say. “OK, we’ll stop.” But he always started up again! This was in the days when all the drills were slow and buzzy and you could feel them vibrate through your whole head. And it took forever to drill out a cavity.

Later in my teens in Colombia, I had a wonderful dentist who, (I suspect) practiced hypnosis on the side. He actually persuaded me that it would hurt less to just have him fill my tooth without an-

aesthetic than to have him inject the anaesthetic which would hurt when it wore off. I still remember it with awe.

And in my thirties I had a dentist whose office wall had a sign saying “We Cater to Cowards.” Nitrous oxide is a wonderful invention. I used to lie in the chair and giggle softly to myself, wishing I could try it without the dentist.

But dentistry has come a long way since my first experience and high speed drills, regular flossing, fluoride toothpaste and a big improvement in anaesthetics have made white knuckle visits a thing of the past. I’ve even had a couple of root canals and survived safe and sound except for the bill at the end. If you haven’t seen your dentist in ages, make an appointment today. You’ll be doing yourself a favour.

Operation Red Nose

For 5 weeks of the year residents of Surrey, Langley, White Rock and West Vancouver can call 604-532-0888 to request a ride home anytime of night.

If you’ve had too much to drink, three volunteers will drive your red nose and your car home for free. It’s run by volunteers. Donations are passed on to community sports. Staff parties often include Operation Red Nose in their plans and make a corporate donation so the whole group gets a safe ride home.

http://www.icbc.com/road_safety/rednosePU.asp

Vancouver Institute

The 2008 Spring schedule for the Vancouver Institute is now online at <http://vaninst.ca/> The first speaker of the new year is on January 12, 2008 Bramwell Tovey, Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. Literary cult figure, William Gibson, writer and creator of cyberpunk, speaks on February 9, 2008.

Don't Confuse Them With Facts

by Brian Hollington



One of the reasons that Vancouver can put on so many demonstrations is that we have a floating population of under-occupied young (and not so young) people whose grasp on reality is, to put it mildly, tenuous. When my younger son joined the Canadian Navy, his first ship was the Terra Nova, a destroyer considerably older than he was. As the newest and youngest member of the crew he was assigned a special duty when they docked in Vancouver: "Stand at the bottom of the gangplank and keep the loonies off the ship."

Loonies? They appeared almost at once: a ragtag selection of Vancouver's permanently discontented, walking around in circles and yelling, "Yanks go home."

"Oy" said Bruce. They paused.

"Not American. Look at the flag on the stern. The blunt end," he added. A kindly lad (like his father) he knew that landsmen are often confused by seafaring terms.

"You can't fool us" was the reply. "So, check my shoulder flashes." One of the more literate did so. "They do say Canada," she reported.

This provoked a meeting of the Vancouver Soviet, looking more like a football huddle than anything else. They found a solution.

"No Canadian Nukes in Vancouver" was the new chant.

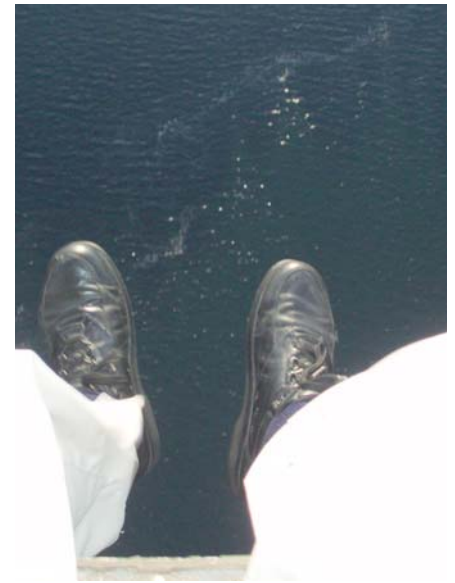
"Oy. We don't have any. No Canadian forces have nuclear weapons"

That did it. The group straggled away, their day quite spoiled. And the following day they were back again. When Bruce protested that they had got all this sorted out the day before, he was told: "Hah! Forgot to mention your nuclear engines, didn't you?"

The poor old Terra Nova, laid down in 1952 and launched in 1955. To be accused of being a nuke. One day, in a flat calm, her elderly turbines got her up to 29 knots. Everyone agreed that was a remarkable turn of speed for an old lady. She has been an artificial reef

for some years now.

The loonies? They are still very much with us. It would be nice to make something useful out of them too. How about speed bumps? ☹



Award for Stuart Munroe

Forty years ago, as a Canadian centennial project, Stuart Munro helped to establish motorcycle safety training in Canada.

Motorcycles used to have a bad reputation for safety. Motorcycle fatalities peaked in 1973, when 903 motorcyclists died on Canadian roads. The heavy toll of deaths and injuries raised an alarm, which led to Stuart, working with the Canada Safety Council, developing a motorcycle training program, the first program of its kind in the world. Transport Canada provided seed funding in 1973-74, and the motorcycle industry has provided ongoing support since then. In 2002 there were 172 fatalities. The Canada Safety Council's "Gearing Up" motorcycle Training Program is recognized by all levels of government and has gained a worldwide reputation as the finest motorcycle training available.

On October 4th, 2007, the Canada Safety Council honored Stuart's contributions with a lifetime membership award. The award ceremony was held at Trev Deely Motorcycle Museum in Vancouver and among the guests were friends from his early biker days in Wales and Ottawa.

Holidays: Gifting Your Favorite Loved One

by Virginia Story

Give yourself, and your favorite loved one, the gift of intellectual stimulation, companionship, and great food.

Give the gift of Seattle's 2008 Regional Gathering (RG), Romp and Circumstance.

On President's Day Weekend, February 15-17, 2008, join all of your favorite loved ones at Mensa of Western Washington's RG in Seattle.

This year we return to the Best Western Executive Inn (completely non-smoking) in downtown Seattle. It is an easy one and a half blocks from the Seattle Center, Space Needle, Science Fiction Museum, and Experience Music Project. Call 1-800-351-3444 or 206-448-9444 to reserve your room. Remember to mention Mensa to get our special room rate, good through January 17, 2008.

Find something for everyone. Including a FREE LUNCH (with coupon) for new members since September 2005.

Play games in the nonstop Game Room, a Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament (Velma Jeremiah won in Portland and is co-chairing with John Recht), Darts for (Scholarship) Dollars, and Trivia.

Listen to a speaker from the Flying Lab Software, an internet Game Development Company that's beta testing "Pirates of the

Seattle's 2008 RG

Romp and Circumstance

President's Day Wkend

February 15-17, 2008

Burning Sea,"a historically based 15th century international video game".

Other events include "How I broke the law in intellectual property", a UW Professor weaving Physics and Math together, a presentation on health care by a speaker from Bastyr University, a Wiccan pastor, someone from Public Access cable TV, and a computer lab for low-techies.

Interested in something unique to our RG? Walk over to the Science Fiction Museum at the Seattle Center and tour with our very own Donna Shirley, its original director. When you have had enough Science Fiction, ask Donna about the Mars Pathfinder rover team which built the 23-pound, six-wheeled robotic explorer Sojourner, as well as the story of the Mars Global Surveyor team.

And, of course, eat with your loved ones. Graze through never ending Hospitality. Feast at the Saturday Night Banquet with a choice of prime rib, chicken Florentine, salmon filet, or vegetarian stir fry. Then listen to Irish music and watch Tempest Burlesque.

Breakfast at the Sunday Brunch Buffet on scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, ham, eggs benedict, crepe wrapped chicken, salmon, bagels, Belgian waffles, and fruit. While eating, listen to a speaker from the National Space Society.

If this is your first RG, come to meet new friends and enjoy out of the ordinary experiences. If this is your nth RG, spend time with old friends and make new ones. If you are an RG Junkie like many of us, well, there isn't anything else I can say, except "Romp On!"

Registration is \$75 by December 31, \$90 by January 31, and \$100 at the door.

Contact Mary Prior with questions and to volunteer at yeomama@msn.com .

For more information and for registration materials go to:

www.mensaww.org/gather.htm

PS Did someone say Book Sale?

January 2008: CBC Documentary on Canadian Harambee Educational Society

The National, hosted by Peter Mansbridge, will air a documentary on the Canadian Harambee Educational Society this January 2008. Keep an eye out for this exciting development. Yet another amazing contribution by a Mensan.

Profiling: Lorrie, Lorrie, Hallelujah

by Muriel Groves



Lorrie Williams, the youngest and only girl of five children, was born in Winnipeg, the twin of a boy who died at five months from pneumonia, which they both caught. Her family was fairly nomadic and she ended up graduating from high school in White Rock after dropping out in grade 10 and returning at age 18. Her two years working at minimum wage emphasized to her the importance of education. She says being female and poorly educated made her realize that she didn't "like the taste of boot leather". She earned a BA from UBC and later an MA in Administration from Western Washington University.

As well as a career in New Westminster as a teacher and vice principal she taught in many countries; Germany, Ethiopia, Thailand and Kenya. The latter job, undertaken in 1982, involved the unpleasant task of "chasing away" students whose families could not afford the high school fees. Lorrie wrote to friends asking them to provide money for these unfortunates. Thus was born the Canadian Harambee Educational Society (CHES: she is both founder and president) which has provided over 400 four-year scholarships for girls to attend high school.

When asked why only for girls, Lorrie cites CHES' adage "We can't do everything... but we can do something." Being young, female, uneducated and living in rural Africa, girls are at the very bottom of the societal heap. At the very least CHES sponsored girls marry later, sometimes to educated men, and have fewer children. Moreover, through a CHES offshoot called ACCES they can get funded for post secondary education.

*Founder and President
of CHES:
Canadian Harambee
Education Society*

An interesting sideline to Lorrie's time in Kenya is formal marriage proposal from the local sub-chief with the promise that of his three wives, she would receive the biggest shamba (compound). Not able to refuse him directly, Lorrie continues to tell him that she "is still thinking on it."

For her work in CHES Lorrie has received many awards including: BC School Superintendents' Award of Merit; Humanist Heroine 1999, the only alien i.e. non-American to receive the award; Avon Women of Inspiration Award (Lorrie didn't realize how heavy Ava, her name for the bronze statue, would be); and the Governor General's Meritorious Service Medal.

Also in recognition of her work Lorrie was selected to be a Delegate and Presenter at the United Nations Conference on Women in Nairobi and Beijing. CHES and her contribution were featured in an article in Canadian Living and a CBC documentary by Erica Johnson will be presented on *The National* in January 2008.

While Lorrie considers CHES her greatest achievement, she has had many other important roles, to mention a few: negotiator for the New Westminster Teachers' Union; President of the Retired Teacher's Associa-



tion of New Westminster; President of the New Westminster Symphony Society (at one time she played percussion with the symphony), National SIGHT Coordinator for Mensa Canada; and New Westminster City Councilor. She topped the polls for City Councilor when she was re-elected in 2005, but said she has no aspiration to be mayor, as she simply does not have the time for this full-time job. (I don't see why not!) She sings with the Sweet Adelines and as a member of the Humane Society provides a "temporary" home for animals. While I interviewed her she fixed the diaper of a supposedly neutered dog in heat.

You may have wondered about the title of this piece. I consider Lorrie's contribution to others a cause for Mensans to celebrate - an inspiration for us all. She has achieved what I consider life's ultimate goal, leaving the world a better place. *Hallelujah. And her truth goes marching on.*

*We can't do everything,
but we can do something.*

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