Northern Nevada Mensa
Volume 35, Issue 12, December 2011

NEVA-MIND



"Think what a better world it would be if we all, the whole world, had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down on our blankets for a nap."

Barbara Jordan, 1936 — 1996

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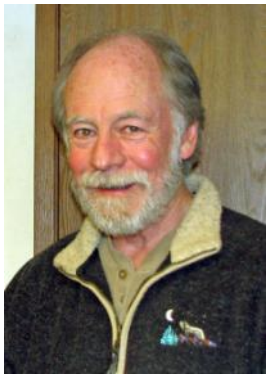
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Volunteers Needed:
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UNR PROCTOR



From the LocSec



by Bob McAllister

A theme that I frequently address (hopefully not annoyingly) is that we, all of us right here in Northern Nevada, the West Coast, the United States, are very fortunate. I realize that there are demonstrations presently going on that express dissatisfaction. But think about it.

In my own example, I've recently had cancer, neck and back surgery. The very successful procedures employed were virtually unheard of not too long ago. I have a state of the art trinket that I carry in my pocket called an iPhone. A few short years ago a billionaire couldn't have had one. My family lives in an enviable part of the world where we experience comfort and freedom.

Some of this may seem shallow as benchmarks for living and there is a point: we aren't living in a scientifically backward time and we aren't living in some "God forsaken" part of the world. It's now (a few years down the road things could change drastically) and we're here.

In the course of my life, I've occasionally stepped back and sort of took stock of things by asking myself — what is the point of life?

Answers to that question have been — to enjoy it, or — to admire it, or — to respect it, or — to experience it.

Now, I've come to the point of believing that the point is — to live it.

Simply that. How we do it is pretty much up to us individually. We all start out, for the most part, as vibrant and, living along the way, begin to shrivel away. In between, there is life to be lived.

We, Northern Nevada Mensa had our usual monthly gathering this November of 2011. It was like many others and yet, I came away feeling that our chapter has some interesting, worthwhile members, most of whom I regard as good friends. Had I been born as recently as the 19th century or had I been born now, but in some place like the Black Hole of Calcutta, life may have turned out to be intractable.



Ebbing Dust Devil by Bob McAllister

So, though I may not have a lot materially, I am wealthy and thankful in my good fortune… ■

In Memoriam: Loren Loiseau



Julia Jaundalderis is sad to report the death of her husband Loren Loiseau, who passed away suddenly on November 5.

"Loren was 45 years old and was a loving husband and father. He spent his career as a software professional in the telecommunications, software and gaming industries. A man of great brilliance and integrity, he was well respected in his field. He will be deeply missed by colleagues, friends and family."

Cards to the widow and daughter, Arija Loiseau, may be sent to
660 House Blend Ln,
Henderson NV 89052.

Notes from Your ExComm

November 12, 2011

- Present were Bob McAllister, LocSec; Annemarie McTaggart, 1st Vice-Secretary; Gerald Lockhart, 2nd Vice-Secretary; Carole Preisach, Treasurer; and Anna Wright, *Neva-Mind* Editor.
- Also present were Don MacGregor, Nomination Committee chair; Ken Wright, RG/AG Chair; Mindy Hsu, Webmaster; and Richard Arbib, Programs Chair.
- Don MacGregor submitted the names of the ExComm candidates for election.
- The committee discussed ways to encourage both new membership and greater involvement by current members.
- Anna Wright gave the 2011 Regional Gathering financial report.
- The ExComm voted to give gratuities to the four entertainment groups who have generously volunteered to perform free at every one of our previous RGs: Dragonfly Aerials, Bohemian Burlesque, Asha World Dancers, and Reno Taiko.
- Ken Wright gave an update on the 2012 Annual Gathering which will be held here in Reno in July.
- Meeting adjourned.



Mensa Candidates for ExComm Offices:

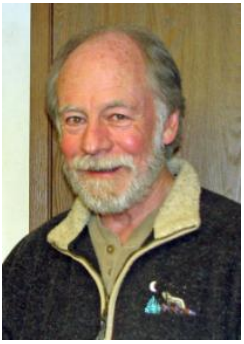


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Ken Wright



Treasurer:
Carole Preisach

LocSec:
Bob McAllister



2nd Vice-Secretary:
Gerald Lockhart



From the Editor



by Anna Wright

Thank you to all who contribute so generously of your time and efforts to make the *Neva-Mind* the best and most entertaining newsletter in Mensa. It is a pleasure to help provide a forum for your thoughts, artwork, puzzles, and creativity. A special thanks to my tireless proofreaders: Anne Stewart, Loren MacArthur, Mindy Hsu, and Bob McAllister. Without you, I could never do it.

Last, and definitely not least, to all, please have the warmest of holidays and the best ever new year. ■

Happy Birthday!

December

Birthstone: Turquoise

Flower: Narcissus

Astrological Signs:

Sagittarius:

November 22 - December 21

Capricorn:

December 22 - January 19



2	**Don Dixon**	Carson City
7	**Ted March**	Fernley
8	**Joseph Orzano Jr.**	Reno
9	**Sherey Gould**	South Lake Tahoe
10	**Bryce Becker**	Sparks
10	**Ronald Speizer**	Reno
11	**Harley Moe**	Reno
16	**Roger Moffitt**	Reno
16	**Thaddeus Segura**	Reno
19	**Eric Marks**	Reno
19	**Robert McAllister**	Washoe Valley
23	**Josee Perrine**	Carson City
26	**Kevin Mancuso**	Sparks
27	**Jude Moran**	Sparks
30	**Jim Marks**	Denio

Welcome!

And Welcome Back!



Darrell Rucker, Sparks
Barbara Day, Reno
Chelsea Teller, Reno

Willkommen, Bienvenidos, Chaire,
Irashaimasu, Dobro pozhalovat', Bienvenue

Puzzle Page

by Travis McCord

Greeks Bearing Gifts



Time to remember your mythology.

Which of the following are Muses, and of what arts? (And for extra credit, who are the others in this list?)

Calliope	Orpheus
Cassandra	Pallas
Clio	Polyhymnia
Erato	Sappho
Eris	Selene
Euterpe	Terpsichore
Gaia	Thalia
Harmonia	Themis
Melpomene	Urania
Mnemosyne	Xanthippe

Bonus: Why would certain modern scientists say most of these people *rock*, and two rock particularly hard?

Answers on page 26

Join us as we gather for our 4th annual concert event.

TubaChristmas is scheduled for Saturday, December 3 at the May Museum in Rancho San Rafael Park. 3 p.m. Free

For those of you who haven't been to this, it's really fun. The music is all performed by tubas, euphoniums… all sorts of bass and baritone instruments. This lends a unique flavor to traditional Christmas music! *TubaChristmas* originated in New York in 1974, and is now an annual event all over the world. The first TC concert in Reno was 1989.



Free parking.
Plan to get there early; seating is limited!

Maybe we'll get wild and crazy and go out for eats or drinks after!

Or, join Game Night at Joe's.

For more information contact Anne at maytheroad@gmail.com.

Bronies by Travis McCord



The Mane... I mean Main cast. (Promo image from Hasbro) Clockwise from top left: Pinkie Pie (earth pony), Rainbow Dash (Pegasus), Princess Celestia (alicorn), Applejack (earth pony), Fluttershy (Pegasus), Rarity (unicorn). Center: Spike (baby dragon), main character Twilight Sparkle (unicorn)

If you've been on the web lately you might have seen something a bit unusual… ponies, as in, candy-colored cartoon ponies.

The fact that there's a new version of the “My Little Pony” franchise shouldn't be a surprise, but what is surprising is that this version of the franchise is popular among grown men. They're called “Bronies” (bros who like ponies), and they're rapidly becoming a phenomenon.

Part the First: the Show

The My Little Pony toy line debuted in 1981; the cartoon debuted in 1984. The show looked like your typical girl’s cartoon fare, with the cast being a bunch of candy-colored ponies, pegasi and unicorns and the human girl who magically encounters them. At first it was an adventure show, with the characters facing threats in Dream Valley. Over the years, though, it became basically a toy commercial, with ponies that acted like little girls doing various cute things featuring the newest toy conveniently available on the shelves.

In 2010, however, the series got a “reboot.” Hasbro, the owners of the license, decided it wanted a new version of the show to debut along with its new cable channel “The Hub” on October 10, 2010. The task of creating the new show went to Lauren Faust. Faust had worked on the series *The Powerpuff Girls* (as a director and storyboard artist) and *Foster’s Home for Imaginary Friends* (as a developer, storyboard artist, and editor), two series with similar (though not as large) crossover appeal. In addition, she was a fan of the original series, even getting the toys — but she came up with her own characterizations, which would become the core characters of the new series *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*.



Lauren Faust

Her intention from the beginning was to create a series that could be watched and enjoyed by both kids and their parents, and also to avoid the clichés of existing “girl's cartoons,” believing that "cartoons for girls don't have to be a puddle of smooshy, cutesy-wootsy, goody-two-shoeness." The best way to do that was to scrap most of what they already had — which wasn't much, due to copyright issues — and instead create something almost entirely new. She and the people she hired were well acquainted with creating strong, believable and likable female characters from their previous work (Including *PowerPuff Girls*, *Foster's*, *My Life as a Teenage Robot*, *et cetera*).

Which leads us to what may be the big secret of the show: *It’s better than it needs to be.* Faust and company could have simply slapped together a half-hour toy commercial and cut corners everywhere else — Hasbro would have been happy, the crew could relax, and the show would have been utterly forgotten inside of nine months. Instead, everyone

involved put their heart and soul into creating a great show, and it shows. The series has something to offer for any modern cartoon fan. Moments pulled straight from old-school cartoons *a la* Tex Avery are combined with smart writing — diverse, well-rounded, non-clichéd characters, a mix of adventure and humor, and, as a sort of bonus, references and jokes that the adults watching can enjoy even as they sail over the kids' heads (for example, so far three episodes include references to *Blazing Saddles*).

By all accounts they did very well: the "Mane 6" characters (the show and the fandom both unsurprisingly abound with horse-related puns) not only avoid the cliché characterizations, but have considerably more depth and complexity than the typical kid's show character, including things like sensible ambitions and subtle flaws. (It's been said one of the pervasive flaws of female characters in TV shows and movies is that they lack agency -- instead either reacting to events as they come or taking passive roles in their lives, the classic damsel in distress. The Mane 6, despite being an all-female cast of a kid's show, are definitely *not* like that — they actively confront the problems they are faced with, and they do so with courage and determination... usually. See the episode "Dragonshy" for a great example). The animation is done in Flash, using a simplified-yet-expressive style to cut costs and time, and yet manages to look like traditional cel-based animation, with vibrant colors and a beautifully rendered world. The voice actors are all veterans of several shows, and imbue their performances with both subtle quirks and the broad humor needed for the slapstick scenes.

Part the Second: the Discovery

Even before the show premiered people were writing about it, with both praise and criticism — primarily the latter. A particularly egregious example was the article in *Ms. Magazine*'s web site that claimed that the show was racist, since the world's leader Princess Celestia is a white alicorn (winged unicorn) reigning over a world of ponies of every other color. It also claimed the character Rainbow Dash reinforces the stereotype of angry tomboy lesbians — despite the fact that the show, being aimed at kids, never references the characters' sexuality at all. (This claim is actually a masterpiece of circular logic: they apparently simply assumed the character was a lesbian because of her rainbow-colored mane and tomboyish attitude. In other words, they accused the character of reinforcing the stereotypes that they themselves used to evaluate the character.)

The real turning point happened not long after the show's debut, when the website Cartoon Brew published an article, "The End of the Creator-Driven Era in TV Animation," which decried the new channel and its series as the end of an age of creative cartoons in favor of soulless corporate cartoons. The article's tone was negative to the point of apocalyptic. This prompted the regulars on the Cartoons and Comics board of the infamous website 4chan.org to check out the series to see what all the fuss was about.

When they did that, they saw all the things I mentioned in the previous section: a well-written, well-animated humorous show that didn't require an insulin drip to watch. Being the type of people who appreciate that, they immediately seized upon the show and popularized it with things like forum discussions and image macros. (An "image macro" is usually just a picture with an appropriate caption used as a quick joke or aside in a forum discussion. A popular one, used to respond to negativity or outright trolling, was a screenshot of main character Twilight Sparkle with the caption "I'm going to tolerate and love the

(Continued on page 10)

(Bronies continued from page 9)



[censored] out of you.", reflecting a sentiment they try to encourage in the show. The fact that it's being used in a part of the web known for gratuitous abuse and insults is amazing in itself.) Their enthusiasm spread to other sites fairly quickly — and with more and more people seeing the show, the fan base has been growing ever since.

It was on 4chan.org where the term "Brony" was first coined. Part of the discussion about the show took place on their /b/ (Random) board; someone on there was the first one to combine the forum designation /b/ with "bro" and "pony" to create the term "/b/rony", which quickly lost the slashes when the term propagated outside of the site. The equivalent term for female fans is 'pegasister' (from Pegasus + sister).

Part the Third: the Phenomenon

Once the show's fan base got going, the show's episodes would be available on YouTube within moments of their initial broadcast. (Hasbro was against this at first, but changed their minds once they noticed the toy sales to "Bronies." As of this writing, all 30 episodes are available.) In addition to making the series available to new viewers, the web allowed fans from all over to virtually come together and enabled the propagation of fan-created material, starting with discussions and image macros, branching into fan art and fan-fiction, and eventually resulting in specialized websites such as Equestria Daily and My Little Brony — the latter being a new site in the "Cheezburger Network," home of Memebase, FailBlog and master LOLcat site http://bronies.memebase.com (which, right there, should show you the extent of the show's appeal). It is the impromptu community that formed around the show that became the greatest asset to the show, helped along by the fact that many of the people involved with the show have weblogs and gallery site accounts and frequently interact with the fans, (including show creator Lauren Faust, whose blog and gallery are at http://fyre-flye.deviantart.com).

The fan-created stuff in particular has an odd tendency to seize upon "background ponies" and create elaborate characters, scenarios and relationships for them out of thin air. It started early, with "Derpy Hooves." A crowd scene in the very first episode had as one of its background ponies a Pegasus with a gray coat, blond mane, and cocked eyes. Her appearance was a mistake — there was originally another layer of crowd ponies in front of her, so an animator probably crossed the eyes as a goof, figuring they wouldn't be seen anyway. The fans did see her, however, and immediately christened her "Derpy Hooves" (in web slang, "derp" refers to a goofy, particularly cross-eyed or wall-eyed, facial expression.) What followed was speculation, fan art, and fan fiction about the character (which, remember, was only in a corner of the screen for a few seconds) with a result that the fans have created their own variants of the character out of whole cloth. (Usually, the "fanon" — fan canon — about her says she's the scatterbrained "Ditzy Doo" referenced in Winter Wrap-Up as having accidentally gone north to retrieve the southern birds, and that she's the town's mail carrier, has a unicorn daughter, and has either a brain problem, something in the autism spectrum, or at least some ophthalmic condition to explain the

crossed eyes. All this from a character that has maybe one word of dialogue — someone said “Muffins!” in a crowd scene in episode 4 — and, combined, probably less than a minute of screen time over the entire series.) The producers have noticed, though — since the 15th episode they've included her in every one as a sort of “Where's Waldo” challenge, and have said that she will be a recurring character starting in season two.

Part the Fourth: Lessons to Take

One of the lessons we can get from the success of *Friendship is Magic* is the true power of that miracle of communication called the Internet. We’ve known for years about the Internet facilitating fringe groups by providing a communication channel between potential members, for good or ill. Here we’re also seeing the showcase aspect of the web, in that people simply showing off how much they liked the series encouraged new viewers to watch it on the web, who would then encourage their friends to watch through things like forum posts, conversations, and articles in journals of social clubs (heh.)

Also to be learned is something Lauren Faust believed from the beginning: kids are smarter than people think. This would all be pointless if the show's intended audience wasn't tuning in to watch along with the bronies.

There is a better lesson, though. *The web will help what it considers good.* It was primarily through people telling people how good the show is over the web that the show's fan base grew and expanded well outside of its intended audience, and became the phenomenon that it is. A series that wasn't good would have been relentlessly mocked at best, or more likely ignored. ■

To See What All The Fuss Is About

Apparently it's a common phenomenon with this show... someone sees images and discussions about the show, takes a look at the series to see what's going on, anD tHEn thE pOnieS Eat yeR bRAin.

Like I said in the article, the series' episodes are available on YouTube, and Hasbro is actually OK with that since it sells toys. In fact, several users now have high-definition versions of the shows available.

The show's pilot, while it does introduce the characters and their interrelationships, has a somewhat different tone than the rest of the season. In my opinion, these particular episodes really showcase the series (for a new viewer, anyway):

Ep. 4, “Applebuck Season.” Applejack's determination to harvest the entire orchard by herself no-matter-what, while still being helpful to everyone, causes problems.

Ep. 7, “Dragonshy.” The cast is called on to convince a sleeping dragon to leave before his smoke covers all of Equestria.

Ep. 11, “Winter Wrap-Up.” Twilight struggles to find her place in the annual winter-to-spring transition.

This one has one hell of an earworm (i.e., song that gets stuck in your head). Be warned. It also showcases one little quirk about the *Friendship is Magic* (FiM) world: the ponies are active stewards, manipulating nature to move things along — the title is literal. They're actually cleaning out the vestiges of winter and preparing to bring in spring.

Nevada Day Parade. Mensa friends meet in Carson City.



Photo by Gerry Lockhart. Donna, Barbara, Bill, Mary and Bob taking a lunch break at the recent Nevada Day festivities in Carson City.



Photo by Bill Kositzky. The Burning Man entry in the Annual Nevada Day parade included 5 floats and a plethora of fire spinners.

Target Practice with emphasis on safety and camaraderie.

Photos by Bob McAllister





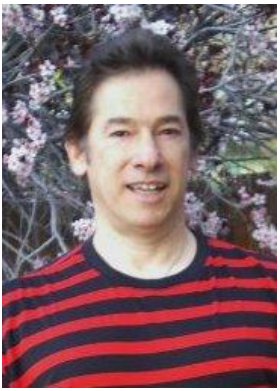




Keith, John, Gerry, and Toby enjoying target practice.







Program Listing

by Richard Arbib

December Monthly Meeting
Saturday, December 17

Time: Arrive after 6 p.m. Performance at 7 p.m.
Topic: Musical Concert
Potluck dinner also, so bring a dish to share.

Join us for Baroque musical performances on harpsichord and viola da gamba by our hostess Annemarie McTaggart, Natalie Sera, and Gail Petersen.



Phone: (775) 747-7636
Address: 570 Cyma Circle, Reno

Directions: Take Interstate 80 to Keystone. Go north on Keystone one block to West 7th Street and turn left. Go three blocks, then turn left on Stoker. Go three blocks on Stoker, then turn right on Stardust, then an immediate left on Cyma Circle.

We'll also be having our traditional Yankee gift exchange. If you'd like to play, bring a wrapped gift of maximum $10 value and suitable for either a man or woman. You'll receive your gift exchange number at the party.
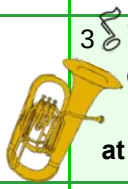




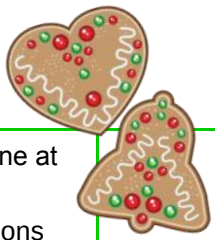
Reno AG 2012 July 4 - 8

Register at: http://www.ag2012.us.mensa.org

DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Game Night at Joe's Place: Saturday Dec 3. Potluck. 4:30 until 8:30 p.m. 1047 Table Mountain Court, Sparks. Contact: Joe (775) 338-6521 or joe_kisenwether@hotmail.com.				1	2	3  **Game Night at Joe's**
4	5 Islamic Ashura	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 **Mensa Meeting/ Concert**
18	19	20 **Supper Club**	21 Hannuka Begins & Winter Solstice	22	23	24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27 **Lunch Bunch**	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve
Jan 1 Happy New Year!	Jan 2	Jan 3	Jan 4	Jan 5	Jan 6	Jan 7 **Game Night at Joe's**

Supper Club: December 20, 6 p.m. ¡Feliz Navidad! Join us for supper at Los Compadres, 1490 E. Fourth St., Reno. Contact Anne maytheroad@gmail.com

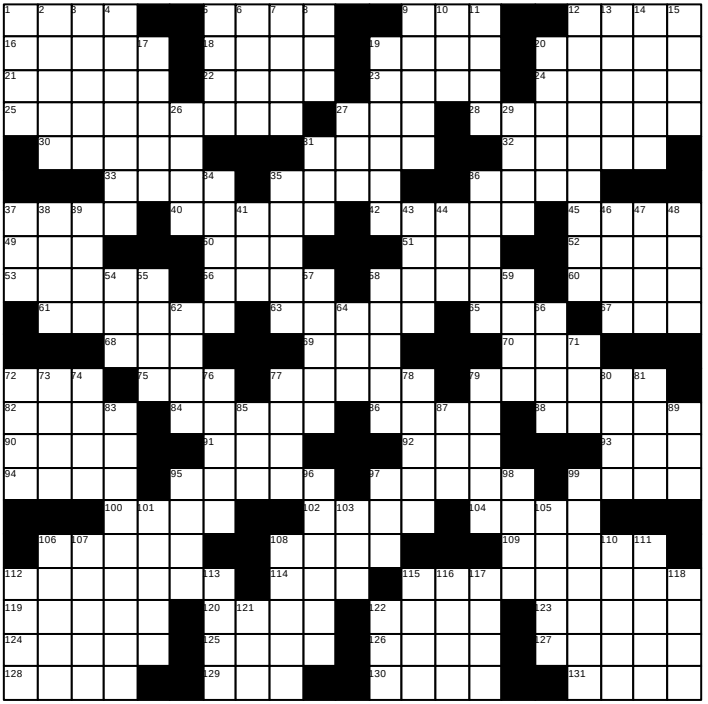




Lunch Bunch: December 27, 11:45 a.m. We'll dine at the Holiday Inn; 55 E. Nugget Ave., Sparks.

IMPORTANT: the Holiday Inn requires reservations ahead. Please RSVP to Don or Laura at 826-5904.

“Yes, Virginia.” *trivia crossword by Anna M. Wright*



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ACROSS

1 Chess move
5 Fill
9 Nuke
12 Vend
16 Birds “thumb”
18 Water (Sp.)
19 Candy __
20 Strange
21 Wheat grinding plants
22 Seasonal exchange
23 Slugs
24 Jack __
25 *With 112-a, her dad's profession
27 Suit trimming
28 Rags
30 Candle
31 Beget
32 Obeys
33 Tree topper
35 High school mil. class
36 Residence hall
37 There's nothing like one.
40 2012 end of the world predictor?
42 Bee business
45 Offers
49 Float like a butterfly...
50 Bad (prefix)
51 Big Blue
52 Decorative needle case
53 Passion
56 Pixies
58 *With 57-d, object of existence question
60 Shallow area
61 *Surprising characteristic of responder
63 Seraphims' head wear
65 Color of suit
67 Denver time
68 Bill's partner
69 *With 94-a, writer’s locale
70 Epoch
72 Parent night org.
75 Gesture before rising up the chimney
77 Sheer
79 *Occupation of responder
82 Adore
84 *Responder is a member of this group
86 *First word of *the* letter
88 Hazard
90 Gets older
91 Yule __
92 Visit date
93 Airport "guesstimate"
94 *With 69-a, writer’s locale
95 *Virginia's age
97 Destroy
99 Slimly
100 Evils
102 Bulb flower

 Answers on page 26

104 Computer repairman
106 Short notes
108 Obstacle
109 Suffix with ecto- and proto-
112 *With 25-a, her dad's profession
114 Clairvoyance
115 Placid
119 Marry secretly
120 Military officer
122 Bollywood dress
123 Isolated
124 Lowest point
125 End
126 Nigeria is its most populous member.
127 Scandinavian
128 Oft decorated with 96-down
129 *Responder's employer
130 *Presumed working location of responder
131 Approach

DOWN

1 Female parent
2 Kathy Griffin's goal
3 Bob Wills sang, "Take me back to __"
4 Symmetric oval
5 Heroic tale
6 Hillbilly opposition
7 Clump
8 Sup
9 Former name of Democratic Republic of Congo
10 Colony member
11 Annoyance
12 *Month of publication
13 Goofed
14 Prevaricators
15 Permits
17 Property
19 *Name of responder
20 Organic compound
26 Streetcar
27 Accommodate
29 Telephone answering response suggested by Alexander G. Bell
31 Child
34 Natural fiber
35 He wants a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas.
36 Object
37 Levee
38 Woe is me!
39 Brief
41 Root vegetable
43 Lubricates
44 BB assoc.
46 Detail
47 Fees
48 Winnow
54 Business abbr.
55 Competition at the Greek games
57 *With 58-d, object of existence question
58 Intimidated
59 Future plant
62 Threaten
64 Downwind
66 Faucet noise
71 Dined
72 Feign
73 African country
74 Allege
76 Cafes
77 Soft sound
78 Equals
79 Build
80 Dunking cookies
81 "Puttin' on the __"
83 Frozen chocolate dessert (2 wds.)
85 Pooch
87 Hail (Lat.)
89 Repose
95 Otherwise
96 Seasonal decoration
97 Rug
98 Stored
99 *Virginia's last name
101 Solitudinarian
103 Music genre
105 Pure
106 Tooth
107 Wear away
108 Car
110 Where 35-d asked for his BB gun
111 Elite intellectuals' society
112 Coin
113 Tatters
115 Mantle
116 Metal bearing rocks
117 AKA Saint __
118 Stag
121 Note of debt
122 Turf



When Lefty Was Right All Along *by Ken Wright*



The Birth of Lefty

I had been writing a daily newsletter called the *Desert Home Companion* since January of 1998; and as it evolved, I found that my readers liked my stories about true events of my life. By the year 2000, I found myself turning out a short story nearly every night for the next day's *DHC*, which I am told is quite prolific for a writer. In 2002, I issued the challenge to my readers to give me criteria for a story, or series of stories, that would make what I wrote so unique that it could not possibly come from anyone but me.

The input that I received was humorous and intended to trip me up and make me an entry into the “Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest” for bad writing.



Some of the criteria were: it was to take place in Alaska, it was to occur in the 1920s-30s, the style would be similar to Guy Noir of *Prairie Home Companion* fame, it had to be convertible to a radio play, "dark and stormy night" had to appear in the first chapter, it had to be funny and have action and romance.

The "Lefty" series ran for 9 chapters that were published and three additional were written but lost in a computer crash. If there is sufficient interest I will attempt to revive the story.

When Lefty Was Right All Along

Anchorage, Alaska, in the summer is a special place of long days and short nights and as we stop in at the Bear-it-All Retirement home to visit with that great detective, ret., Lefty LeBlanc. We can't help but remark about how pleasant the evening is.

We hope to get to the bottom of a case that Lefty worked on some 70 years before; only he knows what really happened on that dark and stormy night in 1932 when Ralph A. Simpleton went missing.

Before we get into Lefty's account of what happened, I feel that we should tell you a little about the man under the gray fedora.

Lefty LeBlanc is a right handed guy who has to live with a contradictory nickname, but then "righty" just doesn't sound tough enough for a guy in his profession. And, no one would hire a guy named Leonard Francis LeBlanc, even if he showed them his knife scar from his time in the service.

He didn't get stabbed by anyone; he just sort of dropped the knife and it stuck in his leg. But, it makes for a good show when he's trying to look tough enough to handle thugs and wandering spouses and the like.

Lefty is a radio private detective who solves crimes and saves the innocent victims on station KFAR nightly, and who moonlights as a real P.I. in between broadcasts. His director, Snerdly Smythe, wouldn't approve and would fire him from the only "paying job" that he can count on. And, Lord knows, you can starve to death as a P.I. in Anchorage. In the

winter it's too cold to do wrong and in the summer everybody is gone fishing while the salmon are running. What little time is left is spent fixing what's broke.

Lefty's right hand man is Socko Caliente, who really is left handed by the way, and was named Socrates Albert Caliente by his dearly departed mother. No one but his mom has ever been allowed to call him anything but Socko, except Lefty, who on occasion will call him Socrates to get his attention or make a point... and always from a distance.

Socko is a compulsive arm puncher and Lefty is still pondering whether Socko got the nickname from this activity or punches arms to live up to his name. It could go either way. Socko puts up a gruff and tough front but he's really a tender, needlepoint-doing kind of guy and wouldn't even step on a bug, unless provoked. I guess when you are six-feet, eight-inches tall and weigh in at 300 pounds, no one is going to call you a sissy and risk finding out just how far those needles can be inserted, or where.

In the complicated events of life there is certain to be a beautiful and thoroughly mysterious woman, and this is no exception.

Our *femme fatale* in distress is one Victoria Smythe Simpleton, who is looking for her husband who seems to have disappeared from the face of the earth. The missing husband's name: Ralph A. Simpleton.

Real estate, mines and imported goods are his business, and business isn't always above board, if you get my drift. He has been known to take an advantage or two, as long as he makes a profit by it. And, that he has; the Simpletons are very well-off indeed. Money is in one instance, not a problem, and in another, the very root of the problem. When you have all you want, others want it too.

As you may have guessed by her middle or actually maiden name, Smythe, Victoria is the daughter of the radio station director Snerdly Smythe, who had grand dreams and aspirations of marrying his only daughter into the wealth and high society that has always seemed to elude him. If he could just keep the common trash like Lefty LeBlanc away from her long enough to catch a rich man.

He was successful and Lefty went away to the service for awhile to mend his broken heart and try to forget Victoria and the image of that no chin-havin', greedy, creep Ralph A. Simpleton pawing the tender person of his Victoria. He was never supposed to see her again.

Lefty's Story

"Lefty can you tell us what happened in your own words on that night back in 1932, when Ralph went missing?"

I never did see Victoria again, at least not until that dark and stormy night so long ago. It was unusual to have so much rain at this time of year, and the overcast was so thick that planes couldn't even find the new airplane strip, Merrill Field that they built across the way from us back in '30.

It was after the 9 o'clock show ended, and I was perusing last week's paper while Socko was brewing us a cup of tea. The telephone rang out in the hall. Well, I couldn't afford my own line quite yet, but I was planning on that soon. Good thing that Socko works for nearly nothing. HA! He would have to get a raise to make nothing. He's a good egg, that Socko.

(Continued on page 20)

(Lefty continued from page 19)

Socko answered the phone and said, sure we'd be around for a while and when he asked who might be calling the line rang off.

He came back into the office where I had been deep into the funny papers and only half listening, shaking his head, talking to himself in that kind of half growl whisper of a really big man. "Hoity-toity dames with their uppity-speakin' and fancy accents..."

I asked him, "Socko, what are you goin' on about?"

"That phone call was from some high-society-talkin' dame who wanted to know if we were going to be around a while. When I said that we were, she hung up on me. I tell ya' Boss, these young people today just don't have any manners, why when I was just a sprout..."

"Socko... Socko... *Socrates!* I get the message. Really, I do."

That man can get wound up easier anything I ever heard of.

Socko's description of the voice with the accent and all, got me right in the old bread-basket, but it couldn't be. I got over her years ago…

"Boss...hey Boss... who is this dame? Do you know her or sumpin'?"

"I think so Socko. It must be Victoria, who else could it be. But why would she contact me after all this time. Maybe she, no... he's rich and I'll never be. "

"UH, Boss… you ain't makin' no sense here... excuse me for sayin' so."

"It's all right Socko. If it is indeed who I think it is, the lady is one Victoria Elizabeth Smythe Simpleton, wife of Ralph A. Simpleton and daughter of my boss Snerdly Smythe, of the London Smythe's, and formerly the love of my life, back before you and I met up in the Army Air Corps and came back here to work."

"OH."

"Yeah, I wasn't always, 'Butch Diamond, Tougher than Steel.' I learned to fly right after I came up here and was flying the mail run for Joe Busch until the train tracks were completed and it started coming in on the train."

"Boss, you never told me when exactly you came here the first time."

"Well Socko, old bean, grab a chair and pour us another tea and I'll sing you my sad song while we wait for the mystery dame to show. I think she would have to be nuts to come out in this rain, but who can say what a woman will do when she sets her mind to it."

(VVVVrrrrrooooooommmmm !!!!!!!!!!)

"Hey! What was that? Boss, did you hear that?"

"I'm not deaf Socko; it was an airplane. Now there goes someone even crazier than Joe Busch. He wouldn't chance a flight in this mess."

"Yeah, really crazy. Here's your tea, Boss."

"Thanks Socko, now where were we…"

"You was gonna' tell me about when you came up here to the territory for the first time."

"OK Socko, I'll tell it, but only because you're my best pal and won't tell tales on me."

"Sure Boss, you have my word on that, you know I'd never do nothin' against you."

"I have to go back to before I was born. Back all the way to the big rush in '98 when my father, Harold London LeBlanc of San Francisco, California, got the gold fever and left

his blackjack dealing job at the Golden Anchor Saloon and lit out for the Klondike to get rich, just like everyone else was doing at that time."

"Yeah, I heard about that."

"Well, who would have thought that an ordinary Joe like my pop would find the glitter, but he did and because he could read and write and do sums, he was able to get his claim filed and protect himself from the shady dealings going on there. He made a really good haul and sold his claim when the gold started to play out and left Alaska. He really hated being cold."

"Yeah, me too, Boss."

"Fate took him to the Mississippi River and life as a gambler on a river boat steaming down the Big Muddy. When they reached New Orleans the captain of the boat had taken a liking to him and invited him to dinner at his home, which he gladly accepted. At the beautiful estate of this friendly captain, he was to meet a vision of loveliness in the form of one Antoinette Marie Jones, of New Orleans, and friend to the captain's only daughter Grace."

"Antoinette was barely five feet tall and had long brown hair which curled in ringlets down her back, but it was her emerald eyes that captured Harold. He couldn't look away from her all night long. He was instantly and madly in love with her from the moment he first looked into her eyes."

Their courtship was short and passionate and the fact that he had a large amount of money to deposit in her father's bank may have hastened the wedding date.

"Their courtship was short and passionate and the fact that he had a large amount of money to deposit in her father's bank may have hastened the wedding date. Or, it could have been my 'early birth' which happened just six months after they were married. You know what they say Socko, 'The first child can come any time. After that they take nine months.'"

"No, Boss, I didn't know that. I don't have any kids."

"It's OK, Socko; neither do I, probably a good thing too. I can barely feed us on what I make. But, back to the story…"

"You know that I was born on August 1st of 1910. Well my old man got worried about having enough money to support his family and got a crazy idea in his head and took off for the Klondike again, convinced that he could make another strike. That was in the spring of '11 and we never heard from him again."

"Gee, that was a tough break Boss."

"We had enough money in the bank to live OK and Grandpa Jones wouldn't let anything happen to us anyway. But, mother was never happy after pop left and would sit and look out the window, waiting for him to come back up the walk."

"She said that he promised to come back to her and he never, ever, broke a promise. He would be back."

"In 1927, Mother died of the flu the Doc said, but I think it was of a broken heart. When she was lying there in her bed she took my hand and asked me to find my father or at least what happened to him to keep him from coming back to her. She believed in him to the end."

"I promised her and left right after the funeral."

To be continued...

Mensa for Kids!

(and kids at heart) by Maurice Pollack and Anna Wright

Word Search

S	S	V	K	L	H	Y	F	I	T	C	E	P	S	T
T	J	T	I	K	A	W	A	G	N	V	A	T	C	R
F	C	M	O	D	A	I	M	F	E	W	A	R	W	E
I	F	R	I	R	N	S	I	J	M	R	R	P	D	E
G	Z	L	M	L	I	K	L	C	A	N	D	L	E	S
U	O	T	O	E	V	E	Y	O	N	M	K	T	B	K
H	H	H	A	A	E	G	S	L	R	D	S	B	G	A
E	I	K	O	O	C	A	U	C	O	A	I	V	L	G
M	U	S	I	C	C	E	S	Q	E	O	C	B	F	U
E	D	O	I	F	H	S	M	F	A	F	X	B	H	U

CARDS
CANDLES
CAROLS
COOKIE
EVE
FAMILY
FEAST
GIFTS
HOLIDAY
MUSIC
ORNAMENT
STAR
STORIES
TREE
WARMTH



Math Square

	-	4	-	5	-8
-		+		X	
9	X	6	+		61
-		+		+	
	+		-		-3
-11		12		43	

Answers on page 26

The art of distracting the eye shows very well in these famous and classic optical illusions. Each one is two different pictures.

GRAFFITI WALL



Do you see a goblet or faces?

Woman and her mirror or is it a skulll?



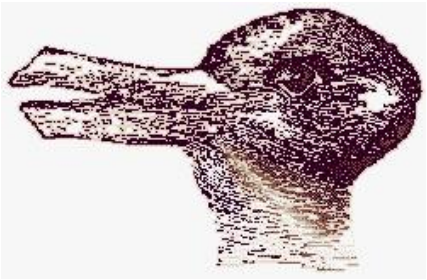


Seal or donkey?

Is this a woman or a jazz musician?

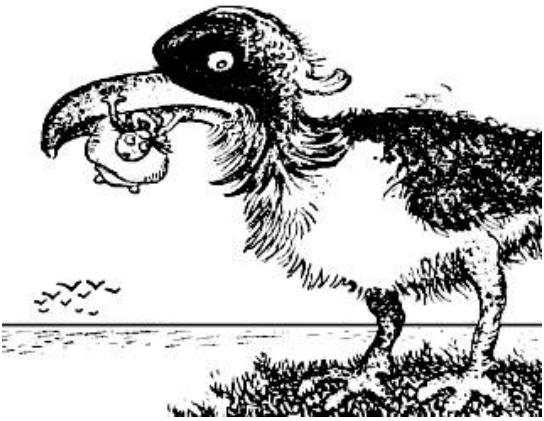






On both of these do you see a rabbit or a duck?

This one is a bit more unusual. The other picture is upside-down.





Girl or old woman?

Have a Blast at Mind Games®

by Jared Levine and Jess Byron, Mind Games co-chairs

Thinking about attending Mind Games®? You've heard about it, thought about it, maybe even checked out the website, but what is it really? Here's what you should know before you go.

Mind Games is a weekend-long event that has up to 300 people playing games that have been on the market for no more than one year, testing them out, providing manufacturers valuable feedback, and selecting the Top 5. Every year, Mensa solicits new games of all types (except video games) from the various game manufacturers, from big names to small independent outfits. There are approximately 60 distinct titles in any typical year, and we get to test them all out. Sometimes we're among the first to ever even see the finished version of a game.

When you get your registration packet, you are handed the list of games. Everyone gets the same list, randomized order-wise, so that the first 30 games listed for each person are different. These are your "assigned" games for the weekend – the only games from which you are permitted to vote for the Top 5, which receive the Mensa Select® seal. Throughout the weekend, you are expected to play those 30 games; while you can play the rest of the games with your extra time, you don't have to.

As you play, you try to find the main features of the games. You can provide feedback to the manufacturers on all sorts of items. Some games will be quick to understand and play, while others take longer. There's the occasional dud in the mix, but you'll play many great games over the weekend, some of which you'll be so excited about that you decide to play again despite having many other games to play. These are some of the best moments in Mind Games — enjoy them.

At the end of the fun, frenzied weekend of play, we announce the Top 5 winners and then hold a games give-away. All of the games played throughout the weekend are repackaged, the names of the Mensans in attendance are randomized, and, in order, we get to select which game we want to take home with us – a nice perk of the weekend. If there are any games left over when we hit the bottom of the list, we work our way back up the list until all the games are gone.

For 2012, we are holding Mind Games in Herndon, VA at the Hyatt Dulles, a short hotel shuttle ride from Dulles Airport. Registration includes round-the-clock hospitality and all the games you can play. All meals from dinner on Friday through breakfast on Sunday will be provided, including two buffet dinners provided by the hotel.

The official start time where announcements happen is at 4 p.m. on Friday, but, if you're trying to decide whether to come early or late, err on the early side. Registration will start around 9 a.m., the games are fluffed (prepared) starting around 10 a.m. or so; once we've completely finished that process anyone who has already arrived is usually welcome to start playing. We're also looking into hosting some early gaming (not using the Mind Games entries) the night before. To find out additional important information, keep up with the happenings, and ask questions, find us on Facebook (search Mind Games 2012). To register for Mind Games, go to mindgames.us.mensa.org. To make your hotel reservations, go to https://resweb.passkey.com/go/MensaMindGames2012.

We'll see you in Herndon on April 20 when Mind Games 2012 officially begins! ■

Help Wanted!

Are you an experienced user of Dreamweaver and/or CSS? Our current Web Mistress, Mindy Hsu, seeks a tutor to help her get over a few bumps in the learning curve. Have you an hour that you would be willing to use to share your knowledge?

Contact Mindy Hsu Webmaster@northernnevada.us.mensa.org

Send a Touch of Home:
Holiday Mail for Heroes

Send a touch of home to the real heroes of America and their families! Holiday Mail for Heroes is back again! For the fifth year in a row the American Red Cross is teaming up with Pitney Bowes for the Holiday Mail for Heroes campaign; enabling the American public to send a "touch of home" during the holiday season to members of our U.S. Armed Forces and their families and to Veterans, many of whom will be far from home during the holidays.

The Red Cross and Pitney Bowes will sort and package the cards, and deliver them to military bases and hospitals, veteran's hospitals and other locations during the holidays.

All cards must be **postmarked no later than Monday, December 7, 2011**. Cards postmarked after December 7 will be returned to the sender. This deadline ensures enough time to sort and distribute cards before the holidays. Please send cards to this address:

Holiday Mail for Heroes
PO Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456

Please:

- Limit cards to 15 per person or 50 for school class or business group
- Sign all cards
- Send holiday-neutral cards rather than those with religious themes

Visit Redcross.org/holidaymail for a full list of recommended guidelines and best practices on the Holiday Mail for Heroes program.



Greeks Bearing Gifts answers:

The muses were the children of Zeus and Mnemosyne. They are:

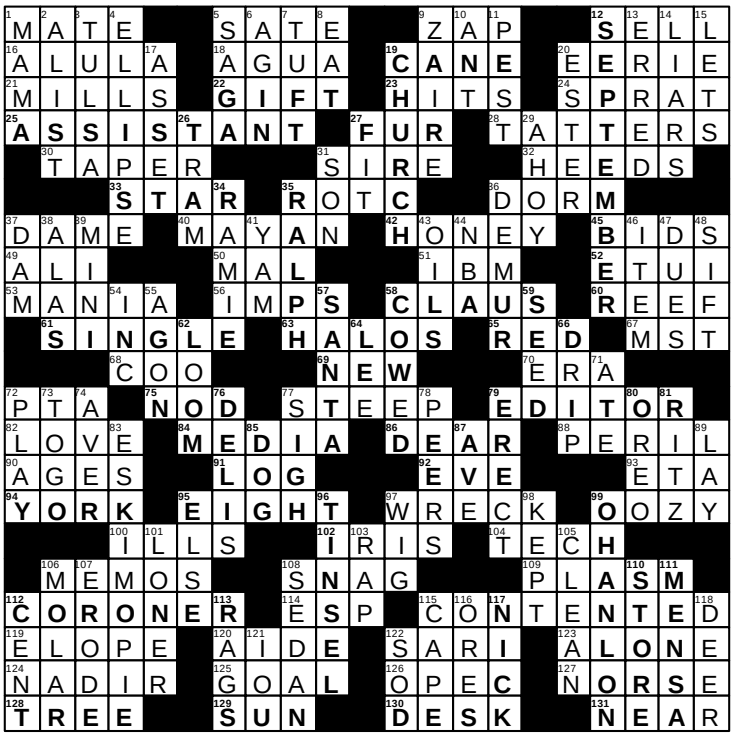
Calliope (epic poetry)
Clio (history)
Erato (love poetry)
Euterpe (song & elegaic poetry)
Melpomene (Tragedy)
Polyhymnia (Hymns)
Terpsichore (Dance)
Thalia (Comedy)
Urania (astronomy)

Sappho was a poet who Plato called the “Tenth Muse.”

Cassandra was in the Iliad; she had the gift of prophecy, but was cursed that no one would believe her.
Eris was the Goddess of Discord.
Gaia was a Titan, and Goddess of the Earth.
Harmonia was Goddess of Harmony.
Orpheus was Calliope's son, and a legendary musician who tried to get his wife out of Hades.
Pallas was another name for Athena. (Alternatively, one of her teachers.)
Selene was a Titan, and Goddess of the Moon.
Themis was a Titan, Goddess of Custom and tradition.
Xanthippe was Socrates' wife, with a (probably unfair) reputation as a shrew.

Yes, Virginia answers:

An astronomer would say they all rock (except for Gaia and Harmonia) because they're also the names of celestial bodies. Most of them are main-belt asteroids; the two who “rock particularly hard” are Selene, another name for our Moon, and Eris, recently discovered dwarf planet. ■





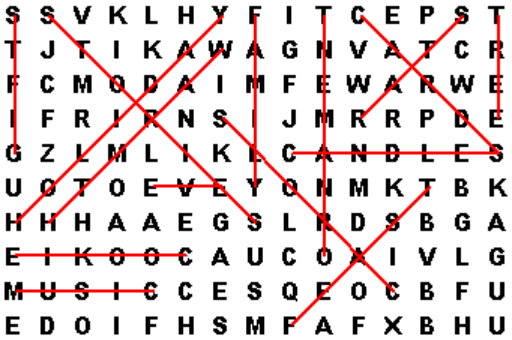
Mensa-Speak *What are we saying?*

AG	Annual Gathering (Conference)
AMC	American Mensa Committee (National Elected or Appointed Officers)
AML	American Mensa Ltd. (National Office Employees)
ExComm	Executive Committee (Local Elected Officers)
LDW	Leadership Development Workshop
LocSec	Local Secretary (Local President)
M/Ms	Mensans
MERF	Mensa Education & Research Foundation
MIL	Mensa International Ltd.
NNM	Northern Nevada Mensa
PRP	Publication Recognition Program
RG	Regional Gathering (Conference)
RVC	Regional Vice-Chair
SIG	Special Interest Group
SIGHT	Service of Information, Guidance and Hospitality to Travelers
WG	World Gathering (Conference)

1	-	4	-	5	-8
-		+		X	
9	X	6	+	7	61
-		+		+	
3	+	2	-	8	-3
-11		12		43	

Mensa for Kids!

answers:



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