NEVA-MIND



Neva-Mind, Northern Nevada Mensa

Volume 36, Issue 12, December 2012

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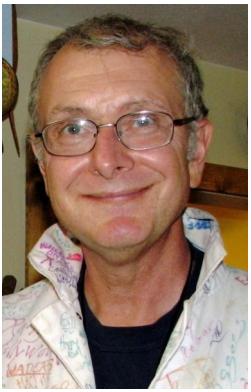
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Volunteers Needed:
MEDIATOR/ARBITRATOR
HISTORIAN
TEST PROCTORS
S.I.G.H.T. COORDINATOR
RECRUITMENT
UNR PROCTOR

Special Edition:
North Pole Exposé



Cover Credits: *Bill Kositzky*



Last summer *Nevada Magazine* put out a call for photos of historic churches in Nevada. I happened to have one and it is published in the November-December issue on page 18.

The First United Methodist Church is one of the oldest remaining churches in Reno. It was built in 1925 and the three-story cathedral was one of the first poured-concrete buildings in town. Located at 209 W. First street, near Wingfield Park.

— Bill Kositzky

A Note from the Editor

by Anna Wright



Feedback! It's what we clamor for.

Your *Neva-Mind* team of contributors spend many hours putting together items of interest for your enjoyment. Give them a gift this year that costs you nothing but means the world to them. Communicate! Let us know what you are reading, what you enjoy, and what you would like to see in the future. Silence may golden but it is very cold. Warm us up!

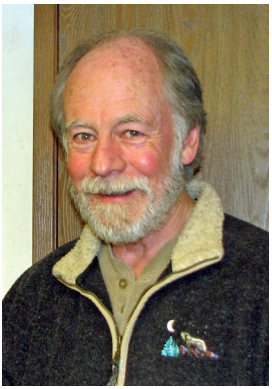
Email me at editor@northernnevada.us.mensa.org and I'll pass along your messages.



Congratulations to the Northern Nevada Mensa team! Ken Wright received the 2012 Publications Recognition Program (PRP) highest award for Best Essay. Mindy Hsu received the award for Best Web Site (small group.) And, the *Neva-Mind* has received 4 awards — for Best Overall Presentation, Most Entertaining Newsletter, Outstanding Newsletter (small group), and the Best Newsletter (called the Owl.) Hurray for us!!!

(PS: This is our second consecutive Owl.)

From the LocSec *by Bob McAllister*



This is a copy of a letter that I've sent to the Reno Gazette-Journal's columnist called "Grandmother with Attitude."

Let me begin by introducing myself to you.

My name is Robert McAllister. I live in Washoe Valley, am a retired Police Inspector of the San Francisco Police Department and have been for the past seven years the head of the Northern Nevada Mensa chapter.

This letter is not about me, however. It's about my mother-in-law, Lt. (j. g.) Gertrude (Trudi) nee von Buwinghausen Martin.

She recently turned 94 and because she is still so sharp, easily had her driver's license renewed.

She is in demand in local bridge venues (Carson City and Tahoe). She has been playing weekly with one group for the past 40 years. Over the years she has played with some Governors' wives and associated with an assortment of luminaries. Regrettably, she has now outlived some of her offspring — a doctor from Columbia University in New York and also her youngest son, a local businessman who was instrumental in saving a number of homes in the recent Washoe Valley fire have both have passed away.

She walks a mile daily regardless of the weather. (Because it's done on her treadmill.) She exercises regularly on her stationary bicycle and does daily floor exercises.

This exercise regimen has been done since the 1950s, at which time she originally had been inspired by Jack LaLanne. It obviously has paid off.

She met her (now passed away) husband, Henry (Hank) Martin, during World War II. He was a Navy pilot (retired Commander) who actively flew in the Pacific theatre during the War. She had been a Navy nurse, stationed at Pearl Harbor and worked at attending many wounded military during this period.

They married shortly after the War and had seven children. The whole family was in tow from one part of the world to another as her husband received different station assignments from the Navy until he retired. (She now has 14 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.) For some decades, she planned 27 meals a day. Shopping, cooking, schooling, washing and planning in general for the large family was a full time job. Her children went on to be doctors, successes in business and all round sources of pride.

She, herself, came from a Houston, Texas, family of nine siblings of which she was the youngest. One of her brothers had fought in World War I.

She served during the War with dignity and competence.

In the 60s and 70s, she worked at the Barton Memorial Hospital as a volunteer.

She and her husband worked at the World Cup races in Heavenly Valley and skied into their seventies. She has lived her whole life with principle and has regularly attended church (to which she drives herself to this day.)

To all who know her, she is considered a gracious lady deserving of respect.

There is a lot to her "story" of which this letter merely, lightly touches. Because Veteran's Day has already passed, this may seem belated. It is still may be of interest to you.

Sincerely,
Robert J. McAllister







Navy Nurse To Give Talk

Lt. (j. g.) Gertrude Buvinghausen, N. C. will speak on her experiences as a navy nurse in Pearl Harbor at the annual luncheon meeting of the Seattle Visiting Nurse Service tomorrow noon at the Washington Athletic Club. Miss Joanna Eckstein, president of the organization, will preside at



Notes From Your ExComm

Minutes of 08-893 ExComm meeting 11/10/2012

Present were LocSec: Bob McAllister, 1st Vice Secretary: Ken Wright, 2nd Vice Secretary: Gerry Lockhart, Treasurer: Carole Preisach, and *Neva-Mind* Editor: Anna Wright. Also present was Webmaster/Testing Coordinator: Mindy Hsu.

Meeting convened at 8:49 p.m. at Famous Dave's Restaurant.

- Wright, A.: Proposal to hold scholarship fundraiser dinner in March of 2013.

  Unanimous agreement. Location will be a restaurant in Reno, details to be announced in January.

  Preisach: Suggestion to check Marie Callender's and Rapscallion's restaurants as they have been known to donate 10% back to club holding events on their property.

- McAllister: Discussion regarding holding another Poker Night. Consensus: warrants another attempt. Details TBA.

- McAllister: Changeover of *Neva-Mind* mailing class from bulk rate to periodical rate in progress (paperwork being submitted.)

- Preisach: Current status of bank accounts sent to officers via e-mail. Suggestion for 50/50 raffle to be held at each local group event as ongoing scholarship fundraising method. Unanimous agreement. Tickets for the raffles will be brought in from various storage locations.

- Wright, K.: Announcement regarding impending San Francisco Regional Mensa RG being held in Pleasanton, CA, at the Hilton Hotel, 16-18 November.

Lockhart: motion to adjourn. Wright, A.: seconded. Unanimous 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, K. Wright



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

December

2	**John Clague**	Zephyr Cove
5	**David Gill**	Carson City
7	**Ted March**	Fernley
8	**Joseph Orzano, Jr.**	Reno
9	**Sherey Gould**	South Lake Tahoe
11	**Harley Moe**	Reno
16	**Roger Moffitt**	Reno
19	**Robert McAllister**	Washoe Valley
19	**Eric Marks**	Reno
23	**Josee Perrine**	Carson City
26	**Christine Alexander**	Carson City
27	**Jude Moran**	Sparks
28	**Andrew Floyd**	Reno
28	**Dr. Gerald Lockhart**	Carson City
30	**Jim Marks**	Denio



WELCOME

Cathy Castro	Incline Village
Kevin Kankel	South Lake Tahoe
Jennifer Lanterman	Reno
Renee Torii	Reno



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

Scamming with a Skimmer

*by Mark G. Simkin**



The customers at 24 Lucky Supermarkets in northern California aren't so lucky. Police discovered that an organized set of scammers had attached skimmers to the firm's self-checkout registers, enabling the thieves to steal account data from hundreds of customers over a two-month period.

As suggested by the accompanying photo, a skimmer is a small device that can read the magnetic encoding on a credit or similar card.

It doesn't look like much, does it? And that is just the point. Skimmers are small, lightweight, and very portable. But they are capable of capturing all the information on your credit card, employee ID card, hotel key, or similar, magnetically-encoded card. When attached to ATMs or similar devices, unsophisticated skimmers store data internally, requiring thieves to return to their crime scenes to retrieve information. More sophisticated models transmit data wirelessly, allowing scammers to skip this risky step.

Credit cards are the most popular targets of skimmers because the cards are so universally accepted as a form of payment, so easy to use online, and provide thieves easy access to cash from ATM machines. The skimmer captures all the information the scammer needs, including your credit card number, the expiration date of the card, and (if it's a debit card), your personal PIN code. (However, it does not include the security code on the back of your credit card, which serves as a control against skimming.)



The two most-common skimming techniques are (1) swiping a card when the scammer temporarily gains custody of it — for example, when a waiter charges your credit card for a meal or a pool attendant swipes your card on the cruise ship, or (2) temporarily affixing the device to a machine — for example, an ATM or gas pump — and getting you to swipe the card. The absence of anything noticeable on the surface of a card-reading device such as an ATM does not guarantee your safety, as clever scammers can sometimes open an ATM reader and install the skimmer behind the front panel.

If you're lucky, your credit card company will catch a scammer for you. This happens when its software notices a sudden change in your buying patterns —

for example, a sudden charge for a big ticket item — and (hopefully) does not approve the purchase. For me, it was a Visa guy who called and wanted to know if I had tried to buy a $10,000 computer from a company in Arkansas at 3am last night. I said “no, I’m in Cancun.” He then asked me if I had tried to buy a $5,000-laptop at 4 a.m. I said “no” again. I think the waiter had skimmed my credit card at dinner earlier that night. Wow… that was fast!

If you’re not lucky, you’ll only know you’ve been skimmed when you discover a major purchase or cash withdrawal on your credit-card statement that you didn’t make. However, it is usually easy to prove you did not make the purchase because it is almost always from a merchant you do not commonly patronize. Also, at brick-and-mortar businesses, the required signature on the purchase receipt won’t match your own. Finally, banks have cameras that film customers making withdrawals at most ATMs. Hopefully, the culprit doesn’t look like you.

Tips for Protecting Yourself

It is difficult for most of us to give up our credit cards. Annually, we Americans charge $3.8 trillion worth of merchandise on our credit cards, and nearly 50% of all taxi fares in New York City are paid with them. We live in a semi-cashless society, so the chances are high that you now depend upon your credit card for some purchases. Moreover, card skimmers today are cheap, durable, and widely available (shop at www.aliexpress.com/wholesale/wholesale-credit-card-skimmer.html, for example!). Nonetheless, you can partially protect yourself from skimming by:

- Shopping at reputable stores.
- Paying cash anywhere you suspect a skimmer may be lurking.
- Using ATM machines inside a bank, rather than outside one, or using outside ATMs on busy streets where tampering is difficult.
- Looking for suspicious devices on the fronts of ATMs, gas pumps, Red Boxes, and public transit ticket machines.
- Carefully checking transactions on your monthly credit-card statements to make sure all of the listed purchases are legitimate.

For further reading: http://www.moneyunder30.com/beware-credit-card-skimmers, and http://pcworld.co.nz/pcworld/pcw.nsf/how-to/how-to-protect-yourself-from-atm-skimmer-scams. ■

*Mark G. Simkin is a Professor of Information Systems at the University of Nevada, Reno.

The Hayden Tract

by Maurice Pollack

Culver City is a small city on the western edge of Los Angeles. It has been a main hub of movie production since the beginning. The streets of Culver City were the locale of the Keystone Kops. Also famous here were the producers Hal Roach and Darryl Selznick. The major studio here was MGM (property is now owned by Sony) which has continued to enlarge the complex.

At the eastern edge of Culver City is the “Hayden Tract.” The property development corporation, together with a Los Angeles architect, have erected a number of interesting buildings, that together house a large number of “new media” companies. The plan is to continue to add buildings, as long as the demand for occupancy continues.

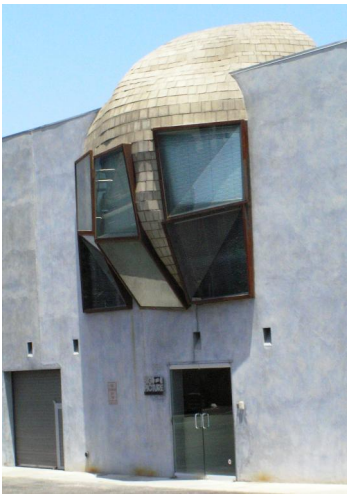
The overall architectural design is quite idiosyncratic. Some observers think it bizarre, and some architectural critics are very positive about it. I am somewhere in the middle, and think of it as experimental; and certainly kept an open mind as I spent a couple of hours wandering the total complex.

One fascinating aspect of these buildings is that the details are as interesting as each overall building. At one corner of the site is an observation tower. It is about six stories high. One side is for a stairway, and the other side houses an elevator. Access was closed when I was there. The side towards the main street has translucent curved panels, and can be lit up at night. This area is not on any “must see” tourist list. And in the time I spent there, I only passed one other couple who were also just looking around. I found out about this development because of an article, in a magazine, written by an architectural critic. ■









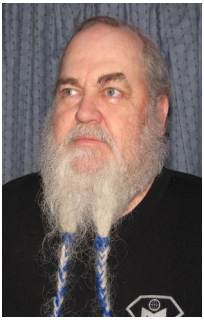






Wide Awake

by Ken Wright



It was early winter in 1975 and the ice was finally frozen hard enough over Mosquito Lake on Fort Richardson to go ice fishing. We had been talking about it and waiting for the right conditions for months. A couple of the more experienced guys (from Michigan and Minnesota) that I worked with decided that it was a good day for it and went to Recreation Services and checked out an ice auger to cut the holes with while the rest of us brewed up some coffee and made some sandwiches for a day of fishing.

Now I don't know why, but the below zero cold never bothered us when we were going fishing (as opposed to the whining when it was work related). Maybe because we expected to be cold and knew that it was just the way it was, or our youth prevented us from caring (lack of good sense); whatever the reason we dressed appropriately (warm and in layers) so it was no big deal. There is a certain perversity to the idea of sitting on a block of ice and putting your hands into cold water when you spend the rest of your days trying to stay warm. But hey, it's fishing!

It took a while to drive out the snow covered dirt road to the lake, even with my four wheel drive vehicle. You didn't want to get going too fast because you would slide into a ditch, or get hung up on the snow banks on the side of the road; even with four wheel drive it could ruin your day. When we got to the intersection with the only other road around the lake we saw tire tracks which were wiggling and sliding from side to side and figured that we would see that vehicle stuck somewhere before long.

As we neared the lake itself and could see the actual frozen surface, we thought that we could see lights reflecting repeatedly off to one side of the area where you entered to fish. We pulled into the parking area, (which was just a clearing in the brush, almost at the lakeshore itself) and sure enough there was a sedan from the base police, according to the lettering on the door and confirmed by the red and blue lights on top which were going full tilt.

The sedan was kind of "parked" at a funny angle, with the front end and driver's side higher than the rest of the car. We guessed that the driver was playing and tried a real fancy pursuit slide or something, based upon the marks in the snow, and got hung up on the brush pile.

That was just the minor problem as we found out, because right then a Military Policeman (MP) holding onto a radio microphone with a cut off cord, went zooming around the car with a really grumpy looking brown bear chasing him! The whole time he was running, the young fellow was still talking into that microphone, calling for backup!

His partner was still inside the car with his seatbelt jammed and for some reason, probably the lack of a microphone, he was having a dickens of a time getting

through to the police base. He was yelling into the speaker that they needed assistance... I guess the poor fellow didn't understand how speakers work, or something.

When the vehicle slid to a stop, it just happened to land on top of Mr. Grumpy's bedroom; which was a cave of sorts in the thick brush pile where he had settled in for a snooze and got interrupted. I don't know if you are at all familiar with the habits of bears, but waking one up from his winter nap is a BIG *No No*. They have absolutely no sense of humor and want to shred whatever caused the disturbance.

Our two heroes were dressed for being inside a warm cozy office, and probably were assigned to exactly that and thought they would go outside and play "Patrolmen in Pursuit" or something. They did not have on long johns, they were wearing uniform dress shoes, and no parkas or gloves; they might just as well have been naked out there in the ten below zero winter weather. It was obvious that they were very cold, even the guy running from the bear, as he had been outside long enough before Grumpy showed up to get some minor frostbite on his fingers.

We were guilty of laughing ourselves silly before we got out and threw a couple of cherry bombs... er, fishing aids... at the bear and all four of us walked towards him yelling and waving our arms, presenting a kind of "united front" and got him to reconsider his options. He finally did move off in search of a better neighborhood, where the humans didn't park on your roof!

The police vehicle was not operable as it had a branch stuck into the oil pan and the belts were gone (I suspect that they broke from the sudden stoppage of the engine). The body had been severely hammered by Grumpy as he took out his anger and it looked like it had been in a rollover (it had not) with its buckled hood and crushed fenders all around. So after we cut MP number two out of his seat belt, and convinced him that the bear was gone, we loaded them up in my International and hauled them back to the main base where they reported to their Duty Officer. We got out of there as fast as possible, lest the MP Duty Officer might think that we had anything to do with their misadventures.

We never did go back out there to fish; it was getting too late in the day and besides Grumpy was still around there somewhere. He was probably still really cranky about the unscheduled wake up call and it was best to give him a year or so to forget. ■



Program Listing

by Richard Arbib



Program Night: December 15 — Christmas Party!

Time: 6 p.m. until….

Hostess: Loren MacArthur

Location. 6240 Stone Valley Drive, Reno. Phone: (775) 746-2938

Look forward to an evening of good food, good conversation and holiday spirits. The gift exchange, strictly optional, works like this: everyone bringing a gift takes a number. Number One chooses a gift, having no idea what it is; and Number Two has the option of choosing another gift or taking Number One's gift. Number One then chooses another gift — and so forth around the circle. No gift can change hands more than three times. The gifts themselves can be funny or an item you've — ummm — been wanting to get rid of. Purchased gifts have a price limit of $10. It's luck of the draw, and person with the highest number can take anyone's gift!

Loren says a reservation at lmacarthur1015@gmail.com or by phone would help so she'll know how much eggnog to have ready.

Directions: Take I-80 direction Sacramento and exit on Robb Drive. Follow Robb to Mae Anne Avenue (second light), turn left, drive two blocks, then right on Stone Valley. 6240 is fifth house on the right. If driving on McCarran, turn west on Mae Anne past Robb to Stone Valley.

Supper Club: December 18, 6 p.m.
Hiroba Sushi (and, it's not just sushi),
3005 Skyline Blvd., Reno, 829-2788
For more information or to offer suggestions for future dinners contact Sandra Lackovic at ssmarticle@gmail.com.

Lunch Bunch Fourth Tuesdays, 11:45 a.m.
December 25: Cancelled for the holidays

Mensa Admissions Testing:
December 1 Saturday from 3-5 p.m.
at Grassroots Books, 660 E Grove St, Reno
Your contact is Mindy Hsu:
mindyhsu2002@yahoo.com.

Sunday, December 2,
Book Signing: 3 - 6 p.m.
Richard Arbib, author of *The Vampire Girl Next Door*, will be signing copies of his novel at Grassroots Books, 660 E. Grove Street, Reno. (between Kietzke Lane & Harvard Way)



Symposi-M: On-line December 9, 5 p.m.

Dec. 9: "A Vision of Crimes in the Future" by criminologist Marc Goodman, who researches and writes about how technology may influence future crime trends. He argues that a combination of technology and crowdsourcing may hold the key to detecting and preventing future crimes and acts of terrorism. Watch the 19-minute video at www.ted.com/talks/marc_goodman_a_vision_of_crimes_in_the_future.html.

After you watch each month's video, attend the live, Mensans-only online discussion at 5 p.m., Pacific time, in the General Chat room of the American Mensa online Community (http://www.community.us.mensa.org).

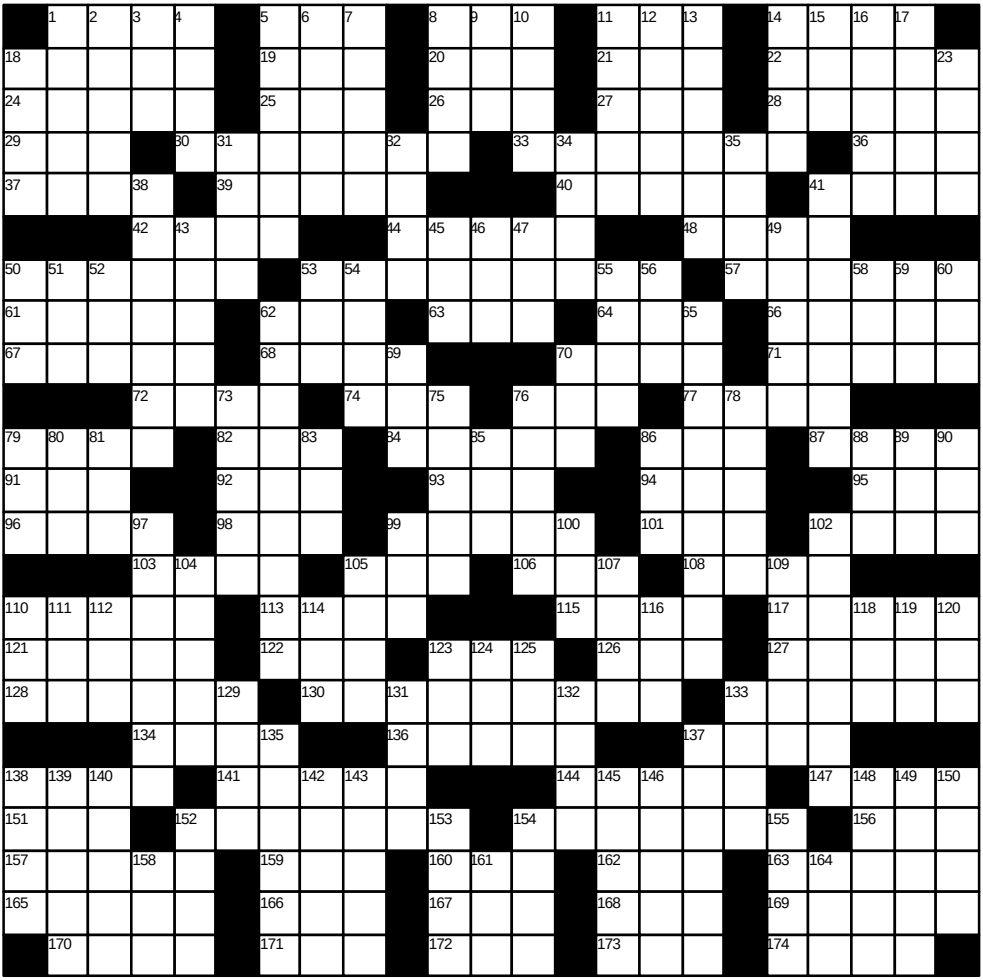
DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Game Night at Joe's Place: First Saturdays, 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Potluck. 1047 Table Mountain Court, Sparks. Contact: Joe (775) 338-6521 or joe_kisenwether@hotmail.com.						1 Game Night at Joe's & Testing
2 Book signing	3	4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Day	8
9 Symposi-M Hanukkah begins	10	11	12	13	14	15 Mensa Party
16	17	18 Supper Club	19	20	21	22 Winter Solstice
23	24	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa begins	27	28	29
30	31	Jan 1 New Year's Day	Jan 2	Jan 3	Jan 4	Jan 5 Game Night at Joe's



Holiday Parties

by Anna M. Wright



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ACROSS

1 Money
5 Scoundrel
8 Colony insect
11 Loose gown worn at mass
14 Type of missile
18 Absolut
19 Author of *The Soul of a Butterfly*
20 Another name for 5-d
21 Harden
22 Pointed at
24 Electronic communication
25 Irritate
26 Party time
27 African antelope
28 Spiritual leader
29 Big Blue
30 Pixies
33 159-a, vermouth, and an olive
36 Bacardi
37 One quality of a good wine
39 Ranker
40 Tasty Xmas bird
41 40-a liver, perhaps
42 Lager or stout
44 Local brewer of 42-a, for short
48 Party wear
50 53-a and orange juice
53 Traditional quaff for the 49-d
57 Wanderer
61 Aroma
62 Cow speak
63 Whelp
64 Dog club (abbr.)
66 Texas site
67 Magic lamp dweller
68 Concentration disorder (abbr.)
70 Olympics sword
71 Swagger
72 Rend
74 Lubricate
76 Copy
77 Tardy
79 Fetching

82 Former USSR's secret police

84 Delivery munchies

86 Okay
87 Stink
91 Pressure unit
92 Serving of corn
93 Binary digit
94 Workout targets
95 Viper
96 Afloat
98 Epoch
99 Dissuade
101 Affirmative
102 Engrave
103 __tasse
105 10 liters (abbr.)
106 Mouser
108 Emoting (abbr.)
110 Latin for happy
113 Degree
115 Journalist's question
117 Harmonize
121 Unsuitable
122 Entire
123 Hertz
126 Genius
127 Joints
128 Turn on the computer, again

130 Cocktails

133 Humans
134 Ghetto
136 Taken __ (shocked)
137 Ladder part
138 Ordered

141 Not a time to drive

144 Happen again

147 Added to the rim of 62-d

151 __ mode

152 Tequila, orange juice, and grenadine

154 36-a, lime juice, and sugar

156 Two
157 Jargon

159 Gordon's

160 It may be open or hosted

162 Vase
163 Strangely
165 Spiked

166 Cheese roll

167 Adieu

168 Oft used synonym of 42-a

169 Artesians
170 Observes
171 Before
172 Stitch
173 Hallucinogen
174 Pros

DOWN

1 Three or more musicians

2 Last name in brewing

3 Winter sport
4 50%

5 Another name for 20-a (Sounds fishy; doesn't it?)

6 Warn
7 It's down south
8 God of war
9 Winter mo.
10 Seethe
11 More than assertive (urban)
12 Musical "slow"
13 Like aqua
14 Japanese dress
15 Spies 'R US
16 Shade
17 First public appearance
18 Blood carrier
23 Sometimes you can stop on it
31 Realm
32 Author of *Please Don't eat the Daisies*
34 Eager
35 Approach
38 Hard rubber
41 Contains Book of Psalms
43 First name in cosmetics
45 Scamp
46 Computer brain
47 Knock

49 Proposal of good wishes

50 Chinese seasoning

51 Chilling ingredient

52 Males
53 Fish

54 Santa's 2 out of 3

55 Back of the neck
56 Stretch to make do
58 Damage
59 Flightless bird
60 Molder

62 Tequila and lime juice

65 Revel

69 Chip mate

70 Agcy. created during Nixon Admin.
73 BB Player Olajowon
75 Defame
76 Ancient Indian
78 Part of AARP (abbr.)
79 Apr. 15 specialist
80 Ship initials
81 Knot
83 Lingerie
85 Pimple
86 Talk incessantly

88 Sample the hors d'eouvres

89 Keyboard key
90 Speed limit, in Paris
97 Fat
99 Danish money (abbr.)
100 Crude

102 36-a, cream, egg yolks

104 Laud

105 Source of many an hors d'eouvre

107 Other __
109 Occupied
110 Evergreen tree
111 Organic chemical suffix

112 Where you find 102-a

114 Infirm
116 "Relay for Life" group (abbr.)
118 Agent (abbr.)
119 Sushi choice
120 Compass point

123 Call for it, in case of 141-a

124 Parent's night group
125 Attack command
129 Ballet skirt
131 Inlets
132 Vegetable
133 Meow

135 Mix

137 Sunk

138 Formal pairs party

139 False name

140 Move to the music

142 Former
143 Scorch
145 Identical
146 Ringlets
148 Confuse
149 Calms

150 Santa's deliveries

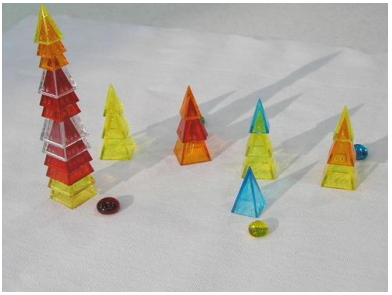
152 Turfs
153 Recedes
154 Outlined
155 State
158 "To the right!"
161 Yes

164 Let's party mo.

Answers on page 25

Game Plan

by Joseph Kisenwether



A game of Undercut being played with Icehouse pieces

Avid readers dream of writing novels, classical musicians dream of composing symphonies, and board gamers dream of designing games. But being gamers, we turn game design itself into a game. There are dozens if not hundreds of board game design contests run every year by gaming conventions or board game companies or blogs or even other game designers. Here is the story of how some of those have affected me.

Back in 2004, bidding games had become very popular in my local game group. Games like RA, Die Weinhandler, Modern Art, and For Sale seemed to have explored the space of possibilities pretty thoroughly, but I was unable to find a game with an auction element in which the winner was the low bidder. I mused about the possibility of making this work until the Icehouse Game Design Competition spurred me into action. The goal was to design a game that could be played with Icehouse pieces, little plastic pyramids that Looney Labs was selling as a "game system." It was a single set of pieces that could be used to play many different games, like a deck of cards can. I designed a game in which players were bidding for stashes of pieces with other stashes of pieces, all the while trying to avoid having "bad" combinations which would cause you to lose points. To my surprise, I won – in something of a landslide.

I called the game Undercut, as the best strategy involved undercutting your opponent's bids often, and submitted it as a purely abstract game. It was a strange idea that didn't lend itself to an obvious theme. It's easy to come up with themes where players are trying to bid low (like contractors bidding on how much it will cost to do a job) or other themes where players were trading resources of the same kind (like trading baseball cards in an attempt to create a complete set), but I was unable to come up with a theme in which both conditions were satisfied. With a good mechanic but lacking a storyline, the game sat on the back burner for a little while.



A Rocks! Prototype as it was submitted to SaltCon.

Seven years later, I was spurred into action again, by another game design contest, the ION Award at SaltCon, a board game convention in Salt Lake City. I re-spun the game, replacing the Icehouse pieces with cards, and finally found a workable theme: Zen Rock Gardening! The items you were trading for were the best rocks to fill out your garden, and the "rock delivery guys"

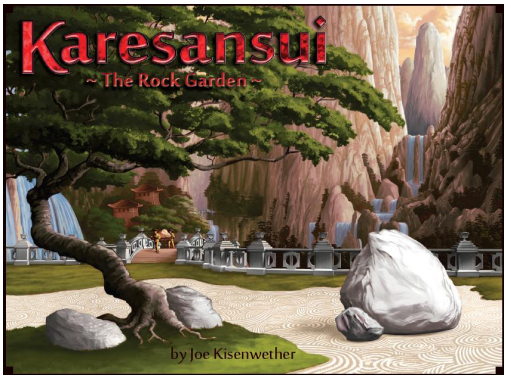
would, of course, give their stashes to the lowest bidders, i.e. the ones that gave them the fewest other rocks to haul away. The theme even worked with the idea of trying to avoid certain “bad” sets: forbidden combinations of stones that would block the flow of chi through your garden.

A game designer friend once told me that the purpose of a theme is to make the rules make sense. It was clear that I had found the theme my game was looking for.

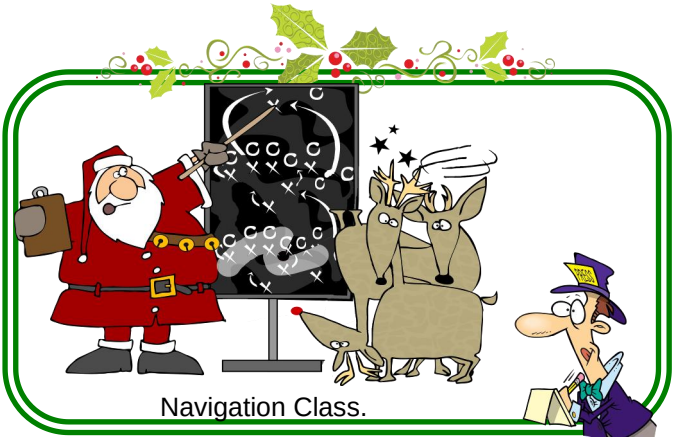
Newly themed and re-titled Rocks!, the game was the winner of the 2012 ION Award and attracted the attention of Eagle Games.

Over the past year, I’ve been working with Eagle to refine the game. We’ve renamed it Karesansui (the Japanese word for rock garden), and have replaced the stone cards with actual stones that get drawn out of a bag. The production value is quite high, and the art looks great. Eagle will most likely be publishing it in 2013.

I say most likely, because there is still one more contest that Karesansui needs to win. Eagle plans to raise the money for the initial production costs of Karesansui with a Kickstarter campaign. If you’d like to pledge to make this game a reality, go to www.kickstarter.com and search for Karesansui. Backers will receive a reward (usually a copy of the game, depending on their pledge level) if the project is successfully funded, and will not owe anything if there are not enough total pledges to reach the goal. As I am writing this, the campaign is scheduled to begin in early December. ■



Cover art for Karesansui



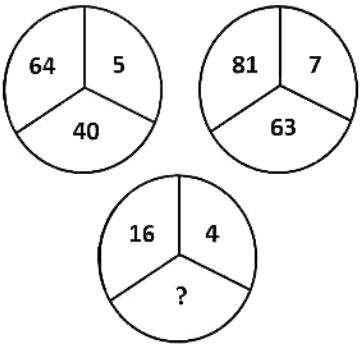
Navigation Class.

Mensa for Kids! *(and kids at heart)*

by Maurice Pollack and Anna Wright



Holly Polygon wonders if you can determine the number that goes where the "?" is located.



Letter Tiles:

Rearrange these tiles to form a quote by Albert Einstein.

i l l	g e	y o u	t y	i c	o u	n w	r y w
e v e	o Z	f r	; i	i n a	A t	t i o	e .
m a g	o m	e t	h e r	L o g	w i l	l g	



Computer Zone:

You've probably heard of NPR (National Public Radio). But, did you know that they are on the web too? Here's an article about young engineers designing a human powered helicopter. It's a bit like riding a bicycle too.

http://www.npr.org/2012/10/14/160670295/flight-club-human-powered-helicopter

Science is so awesome. Someone should write a song about it. Someone did! Listen here to the *Nanotechnology Rap*.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=pv3DsOESwRM



A big THANKS to Christine Barton's youth group for sending us a great link: "Road Trip Geography For Kids" http://www.motosport.com/dirtbike/riding-gear/road-trip-geography-for-kids. We've posted it on out own Mensa for Kids website too: http://northernnevada.us.mensa.org/mensaforkids.html. Thanks for sharing!

GRATEFUL GALE















What *IS* it?

All of these extreme close-ups are of common objects you might find at home around the holidays. Can you identify them?







Answers begin on page 24.

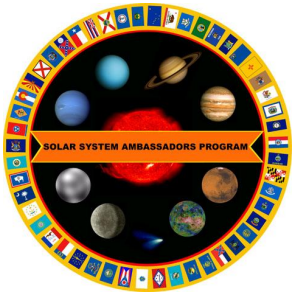
One of these things above does not belong. Which one and why?





A Space Nerd Speaks

by Ken Wright



Greetings Space Nerds,

Even as NASA, JPL and the various other agencies and companies involved are making great strides forward, the clamor from the uninformed reaches me. Just today I was asked what I was going to write about now that "NASA has been unfunded by President Obama being reelected." When people get their science news from the likes of Rush Limbaugh and other uncredentialed talking heads (and believe it), I can only shake my head in amazement.

Space exploration does need more champions like Neil deGrasse Tyson, and certainly there are a lot of issues more immediate in everyday life to be addressed by our President, but rest assured, NASA is alive and well, and the POTUS is a science man!

I am questioning my effectiveness as a Solar System Ambassador and may not continue that assignment in 2013. I have received zero feedback regarding this column and/or any indications of interest from *Neva-Mind* readers so this may also be the last Space Nerd Speaks entry.

In the skies for December:

- December 3: Jupiter at Opposition. The giant planet will be at its closest approach to Earth and its face will be fully illuminated by the Sun. This is the best time to view and photograph Jupiter and its moons.
- December 13: New Moon. The Moon will be directly between the Earth and the Sun and will not be visible from Earth. This phase occurs at 08:42 UTC. (00:42 PST)
- December 13, 14: Geminids Meteor Shower. Considered by many to be the best meteor shower in the heavens, the Geminids are known for producing up to 60 multicolored meteors per hour at their peak. The peak of the shower usually occurs around December 13 and 14, although some meteors should be visible from December 6 - 19. The radiant point for this shower will be in the constellation Gemini. This year the new moon will guarantee a dark sky for what should be an awesome show. Best viewing is usually to the east after midnight from a dark location.
- December 21: December Solstice. The December solstice occurs at 11:12 UTC (03:12 PST). The South Pole of the earth will be tilted toward the Sun, which will have reached its southernmost position in the sky and will be directly over the Tropic of Capricorn at 23.44 degrees south latitude. This is the first day of winter (winter solstice) in the northern hemisphere and the first day of summer (summer solstice) in the southern hemisphere.

- December 28: Full Moon. The Moon will be directly opposite the Earth from the Sun and will be fully illuminated as seen from Earth. This phase occurs at 10:21 UTC. (02:21 PST)

A fun interactive site for those who like to play:

- Eyes on the Solar System http://eyes.nasa.gov/index.html

and

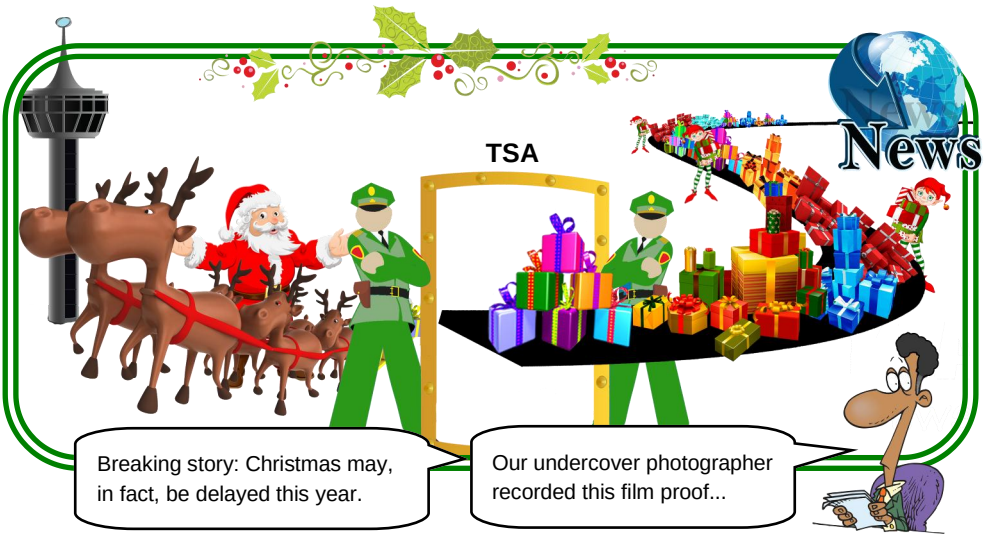
- Mission Control: Alphabetical listing of current missions http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/missions/?type=current

Stay curious and keep looking up. ■

Sudoku: Choose the missing numbers such that each column, row, and square contain each of the digits from 1 to 9. Answers on page 26

						4		6
			1					
				5	7	8		
3	8			6	1			5
		7		3	2		8	9
6					9			3
		2					3	
		5		1	4			
8	1		2				7	4

7		3	1	2				9
		1					6	2
	3				1		4	8
		6			9			
	4			7	2			6
					3			
			4			9	8	7
	5		6	8				





Chestnuts



Fruitcake



Gingerbread House



Hot Chocolate



Cranberries



Popcorn



Pumpkin Pie

What *IS* it?



Cinnamon Sticks



Candy Canes



Turkey

One of these things does not belong.
Give yourself a point if you chose the hot chocolate because it is a liquid or the turkey because it is a meat. Give yourself 2 points if you said the cinnamon sticks. While all of the others are foods to eat, cinnamon sticks are only used for flavoring or aroma.

Holly Polygon's answer:

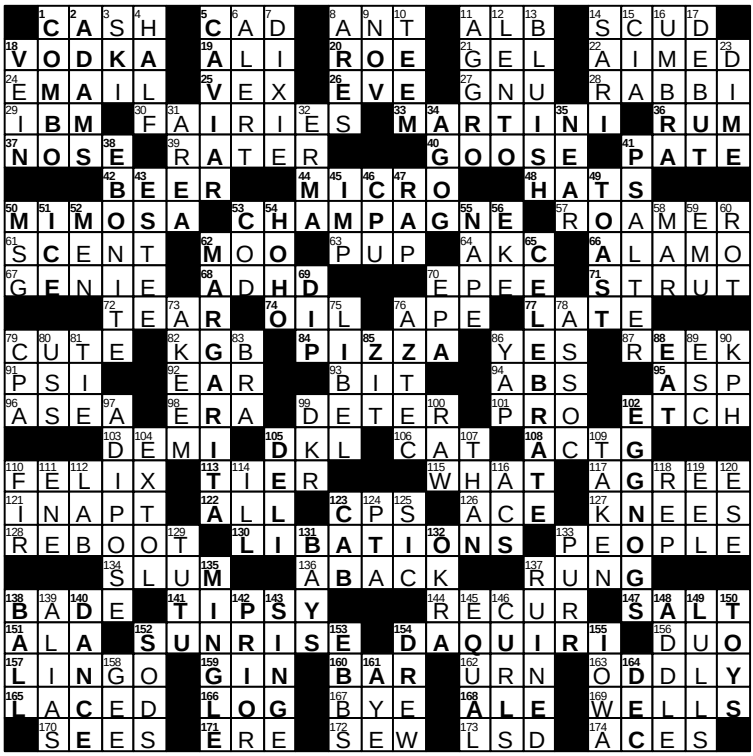
A B

C

One possible answer is
C divided by B is set to "x."
Then x times x is equal to A.
So, the "?" is the number 16.



Holiday Parties answers:



Letter Tiles answer:

"Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will get you everywhere."

Albert Einstein

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Take advantage of the low early registration rates.

American Mensa's AG 2013, Fort Worth, Texas.

http://ag2013.us.mensa.org/

Pair your trip with MERF's "Between Science Fiction and Science" **Colloquium**, same place, one day earlier on July 2.

http://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/colloquium-game1/

Announcing: The Return of the 50/50 Raffle at Local Mensa Events!



Join your fellow Mensans in supporting our scholarship fund. Buy raffle tickets and the chance to win half the pot. The rest goes to the Northern Nevada Mensa Scholarship Fund. See Anna at your next Mensa attendance: $1 each or 6 for $5. Thanks! ■

7	8	3	1	2	6	4	5	9
5	9	1	7	3	4	8	6	2
6	2	4	9	5	8	7	3	1
9	3	7	5	6	1	2	4	8
2	1	6	8	4	9	5	7	3
8	4	5	3	7	2	1	9	6
4	7	8	2	9	3	6	1	5
3	6	2	4	1	5	9	8	7
1	5	9	6	8	7	3	2	4

5	7	1	3	2	8	4	9	6
2	9	8	1	4	6	3	5	7
4	6	3	9	5	7	8	2	1
3	8	9	7	6	1	2	4	5
1	5	7	4	3	2	6	8	9
6	2	4	5	8	9	7	1	3
9	4	2	6	7	5	1	3	8
7	3	5	8	1	4	9	6	2
8	1	6	2	9	3	5	7	4

Sudoku answers

Happy Holidays from your team at the Neva-Mind!





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)



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http://www.mindgames.us.mensa.org/register/

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IDENTIFICATION STATEMENT

The *Neva-Mind* is published monthly by Northern Nevada Mensa. Members of American Mensa local group #893 receive the *Neva-Mind* for a $9.84 portion of their annual membership.

Subscriptions to others are available at $10.00 per year payable by check to *Neva-Mind* Subscriptions, c/o Robert McAllister, 350 Old Washoe Circle, Washoe Valley, NV 89704. Known Office of Publication: Anna M Wright, 510 Michael Dr., Fallon, NV 89406.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
American Mensa, Ltd.,
1229 Corporate Dr. West,
Arlington, TX 76006-6103.