

Mblem

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Coordinator's Corner
Ellen Muratori

Triad area events continue to thrive. The topic of books during Wednesday Lunches weaves in and out of the conversation like a ribbon. From "Did you read...?" to "May I recommend...", to "I couldn't put it down, until I knew what happened next." Joe and Connie Lyons brought the quirky dialogue of Jasper Fforde's "The Eyre Affair" to our attention. I confessed that if a book had more than 250-300 pages, I wasn't likely to stick with it. Thus, the short novels in the Martha's Vineyard murder mysteries of Philip R. Craig continue to have appeal. Brian Stumpfig, in an aside moment at Saturday's supper gave Fforde's series his thumbs up.

An AML newsflash from Paige Falkner recently announced that American Mensa "has teamed up with Amazon.com to create Smart Buys, an online storefront for all things found where Mensa and Amazon intersect." Namely, at www.us.mensa.org/SmartBuys Not only are books available, but also the games chosen at MindGames events since 1990. Now I know where to find the items that local store do not carry.

In Greensboro, we've added a Tuesday evening Supper event at Laddie & Dukes Family Grille and Pub, a little more upscale from our other eateries. The ambience of L&D is not unlike that of Winston-Salem's Thecond Thursday at thix-thirty supper. If we keep up with alliterative tendencies, we may get corny and name it the Fourth Fuseday! (hmmm, not likely!)

August's Saturday Supper gathered some of the "regulars", like Melinda Kite, Rosemary and Tom Tyson, Sarah Maenle, Brian S., Jim Martinez, Robert Jones and myself. Newcomer Edgar Jaynes joined right into the discussion, which included exotic foods, the antics of Road Ragers and of the consequences thereof, airplane construction, and experiences at Mensa World in Orlando. Where else would you hear that the meat of emus and ostriches taste like beef, frogs' legs taste like chicken? When it came to comparing the texture of snails and oysters, the talk was shelved till after we had finished eating.

Lots of possibilities to meet other members. Your turn, to reach out and enjoy your membership.

From summerellen@yahoo.com or 336 292 3754.

A Memphis September Activity

Editor's note: I received this message with a PDF file. Since I am not running that full page ad, this is what it says, mostly. If you want to register, e-mail Trisha directly for the registration form.

M-Friends, a SIG of Memphis Mensa is hosting an Un-Gathering in September. I'm attaching a file with the registration form and would appreciate it if you would publish it in your newsletter and/or broadcast the info to your members. Thanks. Trisha Nelson
M-Friends, <http://M-Friends.org/>

**"After AG" Memphis Un-Gathering ... the party continues ...
September 28 – 30, 2007**

Trisha Nelson, trisha@m-friends.org
Jami Francis, jami@m-friends.org
Susan Hinson, susan@m-friends.org

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For the October issue of Mblem, please send entry to Nina Ward
<cn1533@coastalnet.com>

On the Arts: The Art of Rhythm

David Ridgeway

We've all seen the little babies who, before they can walk, will stand in their cribs or against a table and bob up and down in response to rhythmic noise ... musical or otherwise but mostly musical. This happens around the world in every culture and, I think, is proof that the recognition of rhythm is a primal force ... something given us at birth as part of our animal makeup. Perhaps a sense for movement as a defense mechanism ?? I wouldn't pretend to know but our sense of rhythm is demonstrated at a very early age.

So what makes the sense of rhythm an art? It is our ability to recognize rhythmic sounds beyond our infancy and separating them from all other life noises, bumps and sounds, musical or otherwise, that aren't rhythmic.

This ability, the hardest to learn, can be consciously developed and honed. It is the hardest to hear in complicated musical patterns as are commonly used in classical music arrangements because it is often so drawn out and long between beats it is hard to discern at all and typically one must rely more on the instruments being played because the percussion section is there for accent and punch than rhythmic direction. In these settings, I've found it's easier to hear a rhythm by concentrating on the lower sounding string sections of cellos and bass fiddles; their ups and downs will frequently show the direction the music will take which is one function of rhythm

Rhythms that are easiest to hear will quite often have beats at the tempo of the human heart. The sounds of our mother's hearts.

All you folks take out your Rolling Stones records and listen to "Honky Tonk Women." It starts with one of the most famous drum hooks ever recorded.

... for our purposes ...

Bumpbump bumpbump bump, bumpbump bumpbump bump.

And you could count it like this

Bumpbump bumpbump bump, bumpbump bumpbump bump.

1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4

But clapping your hands or coolly snapping your fingers on the 2nd and 4th counts only would give you the rhythm of the song. The rhythm discovered. Follow the song the whole way through snapping those fingers rhythmically on every second and fourth beat and your finger snapping will not only sound great but will end at the same time the song does ... guaranteed. And for extra fun, get a friend to hit a cowbell or a muffled iron skillet on every beat (count) while you continue to snap your fingers or clap two pieces of round wooden dowel together on every 2nd and 4th beat. Now you're part of a percussion duo and having some real giggles besides.

There are many more beat patterns out there and their rhythms can seem impossible to discern. As a matter of fact ... there are more than a few that I think are impossible to discern ... for me anyway. I'll also try to post a jazz tune called "Dance of the Maya" by John MacLaughlin on the group site so you can hear a more difficult rhythm.

Music is fun and so is rhythm. And while you're banging those cowbells and snapping those fingers, those knocks on the door won't be the police asking you to turn it down; it will be your groupies. So let 'em in. The more the merrier. It sure beats dancing in a crib.

Editor's note: I did not change any of the formatting (including paragraphs) because I thought the author made it with a purpose.

Confucius Birthday Party

LG News
Shiangtai Tuan

As you might know, I have used Confucius (551 – 479 BC) Birthday (September 28) as an excuse to have a party for years. In fact, this is the 25th since I started this tradition in Durham. It is to be on September 22, Saturday his year and it is to be a potluck party. (Please notice it is not the usual third but the fourth Saturday of the month.) Come around 6:30 PM with your favorite dish/drink to share. Non-M friends will be invited. So, there is no reason to ask guests when or why they join Mensa. (Some soft drinks and a box-wine will be provided.) Though Confucius birthday is only the excuse for the party, I would like to say a few words about him anyway.

It is often said that Confucianism is a religion. That is not true because it does not deal with anything supernatural. Someone once asked Confucius about after life. He said: “We don't know about life yet, what do we know about after life?” So, being a Confucianist has no conflict to your religion, be it Christianity, Judaism, Muslim, or Buddhism. Even though Confucius lived over 2500 years ago, he felt similar frustration as we do. He missed the good old days when there were peace and tranquility. He saw injustice in the society. He considered that the government did not do enough for the people, or even treated them poorly. So, he studied the literature, sorted out what was good, thought through the human reactions and came up with some practical solutions.

The first and foremost important thing, he maintained, was education. Though the later “Confucian education” included six subjects (li -- how to treat other people, music, archery, riding, studying standard text, mathematics), by education, he actually meant to teach people to be kind (ren, in Pinyin) and forgiving (shu). Using kindness and forgiveness as the basis, he developed a practical system. Simply said, he wanted those to be at the authoritative position to take care of the lower ranked and the lower ranked to obey the authority. From the smallest unit up, the parents are to take care of the children and the children obey the parents; the lord, the duke, the king (say, the government) is to take care of the people and the people are to obey the lord, the duke, the king (or whatever level of the government). On education, one of his followers, Mencius, maintained that people were born good and kind but needed education to stay so. Another follower, Xun Zi, maintained that people were born cruel and really needed education to be converted to be good and kind. A contemporary, Mo Zi, often considered a critic of Confucius, maintained that people were born neutral and needed education to become good and to stay away from evil. No matter what, all thought education was the most important thing for a society to be healthy and the people to be happy. (By the way, you may find references of all the above people with a simple Google search.)

During his life time, he traveled far and wide trying to convince the rulers (lords) to adopt his system but he had little success. He did land as an Official Historian in the Duke-

dom of Lu. So he concentrated in teaching, editing old treatise, and writing. Of the regularly considered the nine standard Confucian texts, the four “Shu” (books) and five “Jing” (books), six are what he edited. The Analects, dialects between him and his students as collected by his students, is considered THE book to study if you are interested in Confucianism.

It is amazing in the world of philosophy, there were “pairs” where a follower made the master's work known. In Greek philosophy there were Socrates and Plato. In Taoism, there were Lao Zi who wrote Taote Ching (Dao De Jing) and Chuangtzi (Zhuang Zi). In Confucianism, there was Confucius and Mencius (Meng Zi 372 – 289 BC) who lived a hundred years or so after Confucius. His book of his namesake was, and still is, a good illustration of Confucianism and a fun reading. It is listed among the four Shu. I believe you may find the translation in many websites.

Though he was not very successful in promoting his educational theory and political system, Confucianism became the dominant philosophy in Chinese thinking much to the credit of Han dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD) emperors which was after the great prosecution of Confucian scholars in Qin Dynasty (221 – 206 BC, when the First Emperor buried many of them alive). The Han emperors realized the value in his teaching where “the lower ranked should obey the authority”. They promoted Confucianism vigorously to help impose their authority on people. Well, as you might have guessed, they did not always fulfill the part that “the people of authority should take good care of their subjects.” Nevertheless, the Han emperors helped Confucianism to the point that “Confucius said you should (or should not) do” had become the code of conduct of Chinese people. In the meanwhile, I believe, Confucianism was one of the many factors that helped Han Dynasty to be one of the most glorious period of Chinese history. Han's diplomatic as well as their military champion caused their arch enemy in the west move westwards and therefore the Big Migration. Ironically, the Greco-Roman world refers to those coming upon them as “Hans”!

Confucian education is not just reading or moral teaching. It's character building of kindness and forgiveness comes from many directions. It is often summarized as the six “Yi” (arts). 1, Li, courtesy: it is the art of courteous interaction with other people. According to Confucianism, the courteous relationship among people is the basis of a healthy, peaceful society. “Li” is, in fact, the name of one of the five books. 2, Music, usually the playing of Chin, a stringed instrument. 3. Shooting, as in archery. 4. Driving, as in horseback riding and carriage driving. 5. Books, as in reading and writing. 6. Mathematics, as in arithmetic. As you see, it is a rather practical, all around education. This is because, according to Confucianism, a healthy body helps to build a healthy mind and vice versa. It is to help people to survive themselves, to cooperate with other people, to defend themselves and their country, and all in an artistic and poetic approach. Isn't it still the model of a modern education, maybe less the artistic part?

The Farewell Address —Thomas More Zavist

President George Washington’s “Farewell Address” includes at least two Biblical allusions. One allusion is the most remembered passage from his speech. Sadly, the rest of his address has been all but forgotten.

Early in the speech, President Washington thanks his audience, saying

the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected. Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free Constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing as will acquire to the me the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it.

The reference to “brotherly affection” (besides alluding to the city of Philadelphia—the nation’s early capital) alludes to *Romans* 12:10—“*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.*” Together with the reference to “union” just before it, the phrase “union and brotherly affection” alludes to *Romans* 12:4-13—

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching: Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

The reference to “one body in Christ” is a metaphor for the United States—several States, yet one Union.

In the most famous, if misquoted, passage President Washington says

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation; when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice?

It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.

The word “entangle” alludes to *2 Timothy* 2:3-7—

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

The phrase “man that warreth” in verse 4 means “soldier,” and the phrases “strive for masteries,” “crowned” and “lawfully” in verse 5 refer to an athletic contest and signify that you will not win unless you play by the rules. In this allusion, President Washington identifies himself “as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

(conti. to Page 5, Farewell Address)

(Conti. From Page 4, Farewell Address)

In the rest of the address he warns about the danger of disunity, leading to “overgrown military establishments . . . hostile to republican liberty.” He warns about the dangers of special interests (“parties in the State”), of the usurpation of authority, and of public debt. He stresses the need for “religion and morality,” for the “general diffusion of knowledge,” and for “peace and harmony with all” nations.

His warnings fall on the deaf ears of another President George W. Our first President considered himself a “truly enlightened and independent patriot.” He was. Perhaps many were in his day. What few remain enlightened and independent these days have no hope but the occasional token of beneficence an old soldier’s unceasing vows may elicit, as he bids farewell to his Republic.

Editor’s note: Did not change the author’s formatting.

(conti. From P. 3, Confucius)

From this general attitude, you may find the following “four items” in a typical Confucian scholar’s study or travel bag: a lyre, a Go (a board game) set, books, and a sword. Check your room, see if you are close to a Confucian expectation, at least, superficially.

The first line of the first chapter in Analects states: “Isn’t it happiness to learn and review often; isn’t it delightful to receive a friend from afar; isn’t it noble not to be upset when you are not famous?” This, to me, shows the essence of Confucianism: eagerness to learn, harmonious relationship with other people and being humble. Also in Analects, a student summarized: “I reflect on three items every day: did I not review the material that I have learned, did I not fulfill what I promised; was I not loyal to my friends?” Let us remember to do that too.

Words from Nick (1)

RVC Column
Nick Sanford

The biggest issue that our Region (really all of the regions) has faced recently is the fumble of the 2007 Birmingham Alabama Annual Gathering. I’m not particularly fond of taking a negative tone, but some things just have to be said.

Just two weeks before the gathering the Executive Committee of the American Mensa Committee revoked the host agreement with Central Alabama Mensa. The stated reason was “lack of communication” and “inability to get any complete and definitive answers to specific questions.” In short the hospitality plans were falling apart and the ExComm was not getting the answers they needed fast enough. CAM was working closely with the hotel and the health department all the way up to the revocation. A pretty good source of information can be found by logging onto www.us.mensa.org. The whole mess started when the hotel contacted the health department who stated that the hospitality plan would break health department regulations. It is not clear why the

hotel did that. Steve Porter (AG co-chair) had a series of meetings with the hotel and eventually with the health department. He was informed that mixed ingredient foods prepared in private homes were not allowed. That means the 100 gallons of soup that had already been prepared were out. He requested a written response to the remaining plans.

The hold up on figuring out exactly what was allowed slowed down the hospitality planning; however it did not substantially change the overall plan. Meanwhile the hotel told Steve what facilities CAM could not use even though they were explicitly granted in the hotel contract. For example, they stated that there was only enough room to store 12 kegs of beer (I personally saw 36 kegs being chilled at the AG) and that Mensa could not use the food prep area. Steve and LeAnne Porter have a long history of delivering success in Mensa. Let me assure you, they were on top of the matter. I truly believe that all they needed was more time. I do however understand the lack of communication argument from the ExComm. Many of the updates were short and uninformative. Then again, when the up-

date is “we have a meeting with the Health Department tomorrow morning”, not much more detail can be said. Yes, the Porters could have had better communication, and yes the ExComm could have listened to the statements of ‘we can take care of this.’ The death spiral got deeper.

With just 13 days until the gathering would start, the ExComm informed CAM that they had to either give up the hospitality duties while retaining the rest or the host contract would be revoked. CAM did not give up the hospitality and the contract was revoked shortly thereafter. A few days later the health department letter arrived approving most of the plans.

As it turns out, the ExComm does not have the authority to revoke the contract. They did it because that fact was not known at the time and because with just 13 days left “it would have been irresponsible not to.” I understand why they did it, but I don’t think their actions were justified. I have a much more lengthy opinion of this whole mess, but you will have to hunt me down at a Regional Gathering to get that version.

Editor’s note: Received 2007.07.20.

Words From Nick (2)

RVC Column
Nick Sanford

This month brings a plethora of great information for our region, so hold on for the ride.

Let me start by following up on the AG fumble. Robin Crawford has proposed a motion for the September 8th AMC meeting that basically instructs the Executive Committee to make a strong effort to touch base with the other AMC members before doing something well out of the ordinary. I seconded her motion and plan to speak for it. Dave Swanka brought forth a motion with different require-

ments that would achieve the same outcome. Of the two I prefer Robin’s and I am going to vote against Dave’s only because it is redundant.

Atlanta is going to host a Regional Gathering during the fourth weekend in September. This is a veteran group with a lot of great energy behind it, so expect to have a wonderful time. The Memphis group has a fairly new SIG called M-Friends. The SIG is going to host an “Un-Gathering” on the fifth weekend in September. This will be the trial run for what I hope will be an annual Regional Gathering. One of my concerns for them is that a gathering introduces a lot of financial risk. Since this is their first try a loss could be devastating. (Conti. To P. 6, Nick)

My Biases

Ed Williams

Several months ago, in response to a posting in the Menc-Forum which accused me of being biased, I confessed that I am indeed biased. My main biases, I said, are against Marxists - communists, Islamo-fascists, and white Aryan supremacy groups. I was bashed by one participant for being anti-communist, and by another for being against Islamo-fascists. (Strangely, nobody attacked me for being anti-KKK.) At the time, I said that much of my anti-Marxist bias comes from having lived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for 5 years in the early '70s as an officer of the US Embassy. We were in daily danger from Marxist terrorist-guerrillas. The situation then was nowhere near as serious as it is now for diplomats in such places as Baghdad and Kabul, but it was dangerous.

After the overthrow of Peron in 1955 (by fellow-generals), Argentina went through a series of military and civilian governments, none of which ruled honestly and effectively. The attitude of the civilian governments' ministers was "We've only got a couple of years. Let's grab all the money we can while we're here." The military, while not as corrupt as the civilians, seemed unable to govern well. The trade unions - traditionally Peronist - were increasingly influenced by communists, especially in the new industries, such as automobile manufacturing. This led to a violent Marxist uprising in Cordoba in 1969, which was violently suppressed. That became a pattern. The Marxists would engage in some act or campaign of violence, the military would suppress it, and the world press - plus the Socialist-inclined governments - would put the blame on the military, who were reacting (sometimes over-reacting) to violence started by the Marxists.

At that time, many different Marxist terrorist-guerrilla groups were being

formed as a result of the TriContinental Conference in Havana in 1966. Its purpose was to coordinate all pro-Communist, anti-American subversive and guerrilla activities world-wide. In Argentina, several of the main ones were the FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces), the ERP (Revolutionary Army of the People), and the Montoneros. The latter was the more active group. It was formed by a toxic mixture of Catholics and Communists. They used to say "If Jesus Christ were here today, he would be marching with us against the capitalists-imperialists". Their first major action was the kidnaping, torture, and murder of ex-President Gen. Aramburu. They had watched his home in downtown Buenos Aires from a Catholic school across the street. This group also murdered the Chief of Federal Police and his wife by putting a bomb in their boat one Sunday. A Commissioner of Police and his wife were assassinated by a university classmate of their daughter. She was invited to a sleep-over with the daughter at their apartment. She put a bomb under the parents' mattress, and it exploded when they lay down on the bed. The explosion also killed an elderly woman in the apartment on the other side of the bedroom wall.

The ERP was also a vicious gang. They, too, recruited university students. I recall a case in which a new recruit's "initiation" involved going up to a police sergeant guarding the Presidential residence at Olivos (a suburb) as if to ask directions, and shooting him point-blank. The sergeant left a wife and three young children. They caught that young beast and, I understand, dealt with him appropriately. (No, not a trial by a jury of his "peers".) One evening, my wife and I were having a reception, and one of the guests (an Argentine Air Force colonel) arrived late. He took me aside and explained. That morning, a young Air Force recruit was doing sentry duty along the fence of a small Air Force base on the outskirts of the city. Two girls, 19 or 20, came strolling by with a

little dog on a leash. The dog "just happened" to get loose and ran over to the sentry. He leaned his rifle on the fence, picked up the doggie and carried it over to the girls. One of them shot him downward through the gut. It took him 5 hours to die, in extreme pain. I hope those girls were among the "disappeared" who got thrown out of an airplane over the ocean (same for the girl who murdered her friend's parents.).

As for the "disappeared", unfortunately, the military government kept on taking the terrorists' bait. A violent act or attack by a Marxist group would lead to the detention of many people who had, or were believed to have, links of some kind to a terrorist group or one of its members. Many of these were killed by the government. However, some who are included in the statistics of the "disappeared" and presumed killed, actually escaped, left the country, and went to help the communists in Central America, Peru, Bolivia, etc.

I could go on. The ERP kidnaped and murdered my friend, Dr. Oberdan Sallustro, President of FIAT-Argentina. The Montoneros kidnaped and murdered my colleague, Patrick Egan, the US Consul at Cordoba. There's just no end to it. Sometime, I'll write about my own personal experiences with the communist-terrorists. The above should explain my bias against Marxists. I'll leave you with a little dilemma. The Argentine police detained an ERP activist and violated his human rights until he confessed that he was a member of a group which was planning to plant bombs in the common room of a high school, where many of the students were children of Argentine and foreign businessmen and foreign diplomats, on a night they were to have a big dance. Your dilemma - should the police NOT have violated the terrorist's human rights to get the confession? After all, though they knew he was up to something, they didn't know in advance that he was plotting to kill dozens of capitalist-imperialist kids. What's your answer?

(Conti. From P 5 Nick) I would love to see strong support from us for their event. Please consider registering (www.m-friends.org). I will be at both gatherings. Several years ago there was a group called Triad sandwiched between Charlotte/Blue Ridge (Mid North Carolina) and the Eastern North Carolina group. In 2003 the group was dissolved. Recently there has been an infusion of new members, and more importantly, new energy into the area. Several members applied to reform the group and ran a successful campaign for such. I have placed a motion on the September AMC meeting agenda to officially create the new group. Each member in the affected zip codes will have the option to remain in their current group or be switched to Triad. This is a touch premature, but congratulations to the new group. Mensa Testing Day is on October 20th. This is a great topic that can be used to start a conversation with your friends on admission testing. Over the last 12 months American Mensa has gained basically 350 new members each month except for November when we gained 735. MTD is an effected recruiting tool. Be sure to keep in mind that for each test that your group administers you get \$15. It doesn't take very many tests to support a scholarship fund. *Editor's Note: received 2007.08.12