

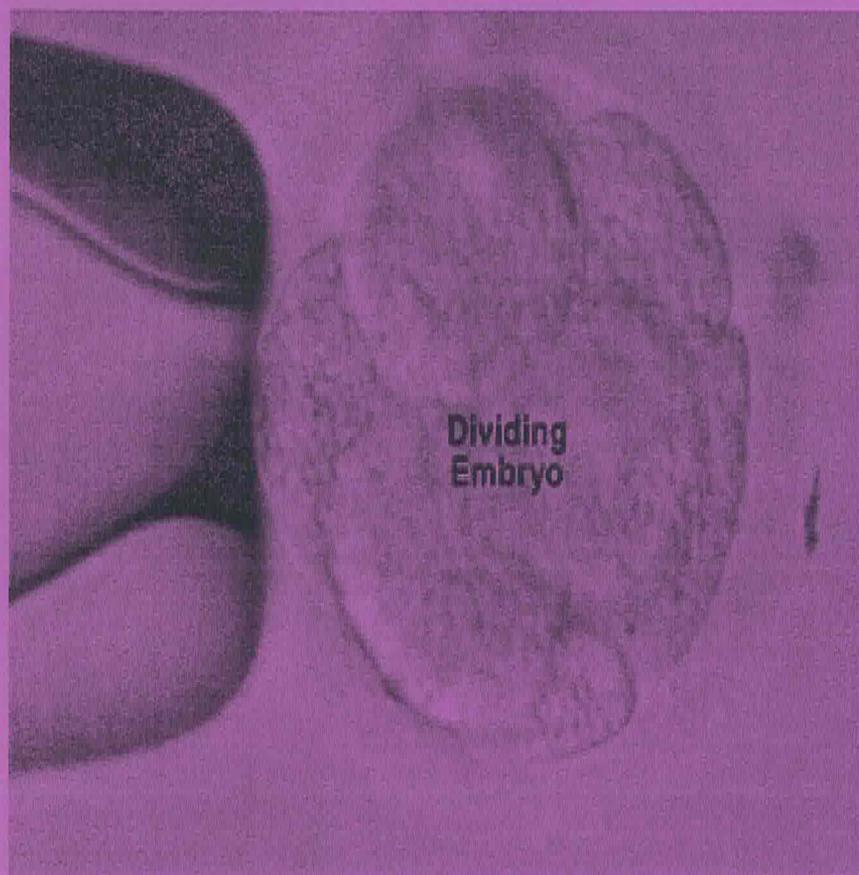
M-Ark

HAND OUTLINE

The newsletter of Mensa Arkansas

American Mensa's Most Educational Newsletter

November 2000



In this issue

Stem Cell Research



Mensa Arkansas Directory



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The oldest continuously inhabited city is Damascus, Syria. It was inhabited at least as early as 2000 B.C.



Views from the LocSec

By DeLynn Holleman

Hello, Arkansas Mensans! We've got some big things going in our group, and everyone can play a part without too much effort. In fact, it will be easy! You see, National Test Day is on November 11, and I'm very excited about the phone calls and emails I've gotten so far. We will have two test sites, one in Northwest Arkansas (contact Harve Thorn) and one in Central Arkansas (contact Duke Heath). I know we already have had several reservations made for testing that day. Please encourage your family and friends to take the test and apply for Mensa membership. (See, I told you it'd be easy.) You might even want to mention that we accept prior evidence in many cases.

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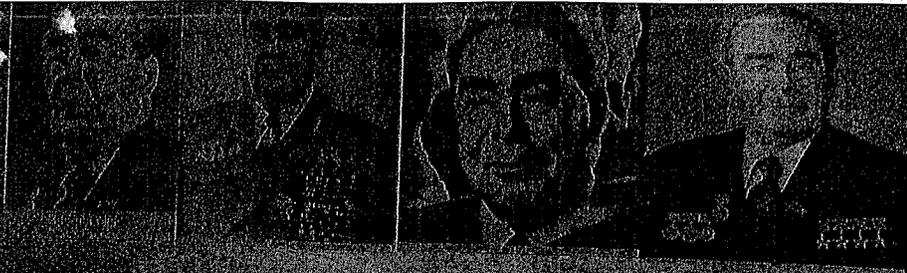
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The Leonids are Coming!



November 17
After
Midnight

Keep Looking Up!

M-Ark

The Newsletter of Mensa Arkansas
American Mensa's Most Educational Newsletter
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STEM CELL
11/00

In this issue

Stem Cell Research

Mensa Arkansas Directory

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Rik's RVC Ramblings The Region Six Report for November 2000

The folks in Austin did it again. Their second annual RG was a great success. Once again I was impressed at the number of local members who took part -- and how many young members were there. From what I see, the canvas of all members, done early last year, is paying off with more membership involvement. If your group is interested trying a canvas, you may want to contact Geri Neemidge, the Lonestar LocSec, for details on how they handled theirs. She can be reached at gneemidge@usa.net.

And, THANK YOU one and all who showed interest in, or volunteered for, the R6 Webmaster position. I have selected Rachael Stewart, who volunteered first. She lives in Austin and also serves as the Editor for their newsletter, the Armadillo Literary Gazette. Our first job will be to restructure the site before it is moved to the national server.

While on the subject of volunteers, NOW is the time to check into helping with the Mensa Scholarship program.

It is always hard to turn away applicants just because the local group where they live does not have a Scholarship Chair. Check with your LocSec (or group President) for more details.

My last item for this column is the National Testing Day, officially set for November 11 although some groups have scheduled it on other days due to local contingencies. If you have a friend who is interested in taking the Mensa test, this may be a good time to encourage them.

If you know someone who feels uneasy about taking the Mensa test, you might suggest that they take the Mensa Home Test first. It is available for purchase on-line at _____ by credit card. This is also being used as a test of the credit card system. If all goes well with this processing, we hope to offer dues renewal via secure credit card processing on-line.

Thank you,
Rik Hess, Region 6 RVC

When the volcanic island of Krakatoa exploded in 1883, tidal waves of 100 feet swept over towns along adjacent coasts, killing more than 36,000 people. Dust from the explosion spread over the greater part of the globe's surface lowering temperatures. Where a mountainous cone once rose 1,400 feet above sea level, there is now a gulf more than 1,000 feet deep.



Astrology Limericks

A collection of limericks by Charles A. Finnell

Now, astrology may be a fad,
And for some folks it makes them feel glad,
But a scholar might say,
In a physicist way,
That such thinking's inherently bad!

It's primarily prejudice mean
In a form that is really extreme
To believe that one's birth
Is no day just for mirth
But determines one's life is obscene!

Secondarily, planets so far
Cannot possibly influence our
Tiny lives here on Earth
Or determine our worth
Which has nothing to do with a star!

Although finally, it must be said,
That your horoscope may feed your head,
By providing advice
That may feel quite nice,
I choose science and kindness instead!

When he won 100,000 francs in the state lottery in 1891, Claude Monet became financially independent. He was rich enough to spend his life any way he wanted to—and he did—wandering about and painting the French countryside.



Omerta

A book review by Gary Wood



Mario Puzo died in July, 1999, almost a year before the publication of this, his last novel, which he had worked on for the last three years of his life. This book is the third installment of his "Mafia trilogy". The first of this trilogy was *The Godfather*, published in 1969 and the second, *The Last Don*, published in 1996. *The Godfather* was a book of epic proportions and was transformed into the critically acclaimed movie so deftly that it made a very tough act for the subsequent books to follow. For the record, each book is about a different Mafia family with the common link being their Mafia affiliation.

The omerta is a code of conduct of the mafia (and other organized crime factions) which deals with two aspects of behavior. The first enjoins the use of private vengeance, rather than the use of police or other law enforcement agencies. The second is the code of silence which prevents them from speaking of their activities with anyone outside their organization. The omerta has been broken in the real world and in this novel as well and this collaboration between mafia and police is a part of the basis of this novel.

Omerta deals with the family of Don Raymonde Aprile who manages to retire from organized crime only to be killed after he is in his retirement. He was very careful to keep his children out of the affairs of the Mafia - one son, Valerius, is an Army colonel who

teaches at West Point, another son, Marcantonio, is a high ranking TV network executive, and his daughter, Nicole, is a successful corporate lawyer who is also an activist in fighting the death penalty. A "nephew", Astorre Viola, is a macaroni importer who also rides horses and sings but has been trained by the Don to take control and protect his children if a threat should come to the family. Needless to say, that threat does come and is the subject of this story.

Omerta must be considered on two levels. The first level is whether the book is good book in and of itself, without consideration of its predecessors. On that level, the best that can be said is that this is a very mediocre book. The plot is rather shallow, the characters are very two-dimensional, and I was halfway through the book before I developed any significant interest. The first half of the book is almost like a textbook on the structure and function of the Mafia. Interesting@but not good novel material by itself. A work by an author who has previously done good work and is now deceased, deserves some respect but that is not enough to salvage this book.

The second level of consideration is as the third installment of the "Godfather trilogy" and, on this level, it must be compared to *The Godfather*. The *Godfather* is, perhaps arguably, one of the greatest novels of the 20th century

Humans will create more original information in the next three years than in the previous 300,000 combined.

and the movie produced from it also falls in that elevated sphere of greatness. The power of *The Godfather* is best illustrated by the fact the second *Godfather* movie was very nearly the equal of the first. In comparison to *The Godfather*, *Omerta* is, quite frankly, nothing. *Omerta* is a classic example of the fact that, all too often, writers run out of ideas before they run out of ink. With all due respect to Mr. Puzo, he will be long remembered for *The Godfather* but, hopefully, time will sweep *Omerta* under the carpet.

I guess there are two questions that I would have to ask myself about this book: 1) Would I read it again for the first time, even if I knew that it was not a wonderful book?, and 2) Will I come back to it to read a second time?

In response to the first question, I have to say that there are a few modern writers whose works I will read almost automatically. The list is short, John Irving (who has never disappointed me), Steven King (who has often disappointed me in the past decade - but not with *Hearts In Atlantis*), John Grisham (who almost always disappoints me), and Mario Puzo (who also disappoints me, but, to his credit, *The Godfather* is a tough act to follow). So, yes, even if I knew it to be flawed, I would read it again for the first time. Will I read it again for the second time? I doubt it.

If you're a die-hard *Godfather/Mafia* fiction addict, you'll probably have to read this book. Just don't expect too much from it.

Mensa Arkansas Meetings

Eureka Springs

10:00am, the first Tuesday of each month.
Daily Planet Internet Cafe
17 White Street, Eureka Springs.

Conway

Thursday, November 30, 6:30 p.m.
Oak Street Bistro

713 Oak Street, Conway 501-450-9908

Little Rock

Thursday, Dec 28, 6:30 p.m. 501-221-3330
Trio's
8201 Cantrell, Little Rock



The Funny Farm

by Don Wyatt

Famous People Next Job Interviews

Julius Caesar: My last job involved a lot of office politics and backstabbing. I'd like to get away from all that.

Jesse James: I can list among my experience and skills: leadership, extensive travel, logistical organization, intimate understanding of firearms, and knowledge of security measures at numerous banks.

Marie Antoinette: My management style has been criticized, but I'd like to think of myself as a people person.

Joseph Guillotine: I can give your company a head start on the competition.

Hamlet: My position was eliminated in a hostile takeover.

Lucretia Borgia: My greatest accomplishment? After I took over the department, our competition just seemed to drop out of sight one by one.

Pandora: I can bring a lot to your company. I like discovering new things.

Genghis Khan: My primary talent is downsizing. On my last job, I downsized my staff, my organization, and the populations of several countries.

MacBeth: Would I go after my boss's job? Do I look like the kind of guy who would knock off his boss for a promotion?

Lady Godiva: What do mean this isn't business casual?

Elvis: My last boss and I... Say, are you going to eat those fries?

Economic and Political Theory 101

Feudalism: You have two cows. Your lord takes some of the milk.

Pure Socialism: You have two cows. The government takes them and puts them in a barn with everyone else's cows. You have to take care of all the cows. The government gives you as much milk as you need.

Bureaucratic Socialism: You have two cows. The government takes them and puts them in a barn with everyone else's cows. They are cared for by ex-chicken farmers. You have to take care of the chickens the government took from the chicken farmers. The government gives you as much milk and eggs as the regulations say you should need.

Fascism: You have two cows. The government takes both, hires you to take care of them, and sells you the milk.

Pure Communism: You have two cows. Your neighbors help you take care of them, and you all share the milk.

Russian Communism: You have two cows. You have to take care of them, but the government takes all the milk.

Cambodian Communism: You have two cows. The government takes both and shoots you.

Almost all of the helium that exists in the world is a product of natural-gas wells in the United States.

Dictatorship: You have two cows. The government takes both and imprisons you.

Pure Democracy: You have two cows. Your neighbors decide who gets the milk.

Representative Democracy: You have two cows. Your neighbors pick someone to tell you who gets the milk.

Bureaucracy: You have two cows. At first the government regulates what you can feed them and when you can milk them. Then it pays you not to milk them. Then it takes both, shoots one, milks the other and pours the milk down the drain. Then it requires you to fill out forms accounting for the missing cows.

Pure Anarchy: You have two cows. Either you sell the milk at a fair price or your neighbors try to take the cows and kill you.

Surrealism: You have two giraffes. The government requires you to take harmonica lessons.

Ten Differences Between You And Your Boss

1. When you take a long time, you're slow. When your boss takes a long time, he's thorough.
2. When you don't do it, you're lazy. When your boss doesn't do it, he's too busy.
3. When you make a mistake, you're an idiot. When your boss makes a mistake, he's only human.
4. When doing something without being told, you're overstepping your authority. When your boss does the same thing, that's initiative.
5. When you take a stand, you're being bull-headed. When your boss does it, he's being firm.
6. When you overlooked a rule of etiquette, you're being rude. When your boss skips a few rules, he's being original.
7. When you please your boss, you're ass kissing. When your boss pleases his boss, he's being co-operative.
8. When you're out of the office, you're wandering around. When your boss is out of the office, he's on business.
9. When you're on a day off sick, you're always sick. When your boss takes a sick day, he must be very ill.
10. When you apply for leave, you must be going for an interview. When your boss applies for leave, it's because he's overworked.

The average oak tree gives off 28,000 gallons of water each season.

The Skeptic's Corner

Stem Cell Research

By Duke Heath

The most promising and controversial area in health care today is the field of stem cell research. Before we can discuss the controversy that exists, we need to know what stem cells are, where they come from, and what potential they hold for human health.

When a sperm fertilizes an egg, the product is a single cell. This fertilized egg is called a totipotent stem cell, because it has the potential to develop into a complete organism. In the first hours and days after fertilization, this cell begins to divide into identical totipotent stem cells. Four days after fertilization, these totipotent stem cells begin to specialize, forming a hollow sphere of cells called a blastocyst. One part of the blastocyst is a cluster of cells called the inner cell mass. These are the stem cells that will go on to form most of the 210 tissues of the human body. These are called pluripotent stem cells because they have the ability to become many types of tissue. These cells are more specialized; they already have an idea about what type of tissue they want to become. The more specialized a cell is, the harder it is to coerce it into becoming the type of tissue that might be needed.

Discarded human embryos from fertility clinics and fetal tissues from terminated pregnancies are the main sources of stem cells.

Research using human pluripotent stem cells holds enormous promise for advances in the prevention, treatment, and diagnosis of a vast array of diseases. Every realm of medicine will benefit from this research.

Experts believe stem cell research has the potential to cure many diseases such as juvenile diabetes, Parkinson's, heart disease, organ degeneration and even spinal injuries. The incredible leaps in medicine that have occurred only very recently thru stem cell research is miraculous. This research has the potential to be the true fountain of youth.

So, what is so controversial? The less differentiated a cell is, the greater is its potential to heal. For this reason the ideal source of stem cells are human embryos that are only a few days old. These human embryos must be destroyed in order to do the research. The majority of embryos used in research are embryos not chosen for use in fertility clinics. Their fate before being chosen was to be destroyed. Those used in research have the potential to save millions of lives and heal unimaginable suffering. But these are live human embryos with which we are dealing. Furthermore, as funding becomes available, companies will begin growing their own human embryos in petri dishes for the specific

Although he was famous for inventing the cotton gin, Eli Whitney made no money from his invention. He failed to get a patent.

purpose of destroying them for research. Many people believe this is nothing less than murder.

"The discarded fetal tissue and unused embryos from fertility clinics are destined to be thrown out with the trash. Why not give them meaning and let their deaths save and help millions?"

Dean Edell

There are also stem cells found in adults. Since stem cell research began a couple of years ago, it has been the accepted rule that adult stem cells are too specialized to be coerced into forming the many different tissues needed to achieve the full potential of embryonic stem cells. Very recently, however, it has been shown that these adult stem cells can indeed be used to produce many different types of tissue. Neural stem cells, when implanted in muscle or heart tissue, begin producing those tissues. Apparently, there is an unidentified gene in the host tissue that commands the neural cells to produce the host tissue.

So, this being the case, why use embryonic cells at all? Adult stem cells have limitations. The accessibility of these cells limits their ease of use. Pluripotent stem cells also have amazing abilities to self-renew and to form many different cell types, even complex tissues. In contrast, the full potential of adult stem cells is uncertain. Unlike pluripotent stem cells, the adult stem cells are able to

divide only a limited number of times, which would limit their usefulness in the production of adequate numbers of cells for reliable therapies. The ability of embryonic cells to divide indefinitely makes them ideal for research. Their shelf life is unlimited. They can produce unlimited supplies of tissues. For this reason, researchers believe research should continue on both types of cells.

Because of their unlimited potential, I am in favor of stem cell research. I am not in favor of fertilizing eggs specifically for this purpose. Since they have unlimited shelf life and can divide indefinitely, we should be able to get all the cells needed for therapy and research from the embryos that were going to be destroyed anyway. But it will take time and the people in this new industry are not going to wait.

As Dr. Dean Edel says, "The discarded fetal tissue and unused embryos from fertility clinics are destined to be thrown out with the trash. Why not give them meaning and let their deaths save and help millions?" But even as I type those words, I am haunted by the echo of a voice from half a century ago. I can hear the good doctor Josef Mengele say, "All of these Jews are going to die anyway, so why not experiment on them?"

(Editor's note; A study just released may make this debate moot. Check News from Medicine-Stem cells from body fat.)

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

By DeLynn Holleman

When I was asked to comment on stem cell research, Duke told me it was because of my background in molecular biology research. I'm not sure that he knew I am also an active member of a fundamentalist Christian church.

Yes, I know that at times, that seems like a paradox, but I rather enjoy being difficult to categorize. So let's take a look at some of the more controversial aspects of stem cell research.

Stem cells have a huge potential for enriching people's lives. Just a few of the areas that may be affected are research in human development, drug testing on human cell lines, organ transplantation, and cell therapies for Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, spinal cord injury, stroke, burns, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis. In light of all this, what's the problem?

As I see it, most of the trepidation about stem cell research originates from two concerns: Source of the cells, and fear of the unknown.

There are several possible sources of stem cells. These cells are present in adults, but they aren't available for all tissues (adult cardiac stem cells and pancreatic islet stem cells in humans haven't been located, according to the NIH). The adult stem cells can also be hard to isolate and purify (getting brain stem cells by removing a part of the brain isn't really a great option, is it?)

Another stem cell source is cord blood, which seems like a great option. It's fairly plentiful, and would normally be discarded. And then there is the real core of the matter. Most of the human stem cells that have been used thus far are obtained from embryos. If you could get these cells from ectopic pregnancies or spontaneous abortions, that would be one thing. But the cells need to be alive and healthy. This is often not the case in these instances. That leaves induced abortions. Consent to use the cells is obtained prior to the procedure, and the procedure is modified to result in less damage to the cells. Even then, cells from up to six abortions are needed to get enough stem cells for use in some therapies.

Fear of the unknown is a different matter. It often results from a lack of background in the field, or uncertainty over applying the principles of your individual ethics system. This is where we get the Frankenstein hypotheses.

Ignorance is not always bliss, but some people are uncomfortable with challenges to the way things have always been. It's not helpful that laws in our country lag far behind technology.

I might point out that if stem cell therapies become commonplace, we may end up making drastic changes in the composition of the gene pool. After all, people who once might have died

The Chinese city of Chinkiang, now 150 miles inland, was once a seaport. Silt of the Yangtze River has built up the land for that distance.

will live to pass on these diseases to their children. Of course, medical science has already done that time and again.

As for my personal viewpoint (which has been known to change over time) I'm OK with research using tissues from adults who have given consent, and with using tissues that would normally be discarded, again with consent. I do

have a problem with using women as containers to produce fetuses for the sole purpose of harvesting tissues. The same goes for mass production of embryos in the lab for tissue harvest. The real question here gets into when humanity begins, and I don't know the black-and-white answer to that.

EMBRACE LIFE!

National Testing Day Sites

Saturday, November 11

Conway

UCA Campus
Room 129
Torreyson Library 9:00 a.m.
870-256-4876 Duke Heath

Greenland

Greenland Elementary School
8am for walk in's, 9am for pre-registered
501 443 0818 Harve Thorn

Those taking the test should arrive early. There is a thirty dollar testing fee.

There have been many violent conflicts in competition over water rights throughout history. It is appropriate that the word "rivalry" comes from the Latin rivus, which means a "stream."



Windows Haiku

Submitted by DeLynn Holleman

In Japan, they have replaced the impersonal Microsoft error messages with their own Japanese haiku poetry, each only 17 syllables: 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, 5 in the third.

Your file was so big,
It might be very useful.
But now it is gone.

The Web site you seek
Cannot be located, but
Countless more exist.

Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent, and reboot.
Order shall return.

ABORTED effort
Close all that you have worked on.
You ask far too much.

Windows NT crashed.
I am the Blue Screen of Death.
No one hears your screams.

Yesterday it worked.
Today it is not working.
Windows is like that.

First snow, then silence.
This thousand-dollar screen dies
So beautifully.

With searching comes loss
And the presence of absence
"My Novel" not found.

The Tao that is seen
Is not the true Tao - until
You bring fresh toner.

Stay the patient course.
Of little worth is your ire.
The network is down.

A crash reduces
Your expensive computer
To a simple stone.

Three things are certain
Death, taxes, and lost data.
Guess which has occurred.

You step in the stream,
But the water has moved on.
This page is not here.

Out of memory.
We wish to hold the whole sky,
But we never will.

Having been erased,
The document you're seeking
Must now be re-typed.

Serious error
All shortcuts have disappeared.
Screen. Mind. Both are blank.

Famous Birthdays

Arkansas Mensans in bold

November

- 3 **Earl Douglas Weniger**
Charles Bronson, Dennis Miller, Michael S Dukakis
- 4 **Lewis Culver, Dale Kriner Jr., Duke Heath, Frank Wilmer**
Will Rogers, Walter Cronkite, William III of Orange
- 5 **William Seim**
Roy Rogers, Art Garfunkel, Bill Walton
- 6 **John Summers, Joseph Herman Scherrey**
Joseph Smith, James A Naismith, Glenn Frey
- 8 **Janina Eggenberger**
Edmund Halley, Christian Barnard, Bonnie Raitt
- 9 **Jack Allen Sallee**
Ed Wynn, Gregory Pincus, J. William Fullbright
- 10 **Lisa Dolejs Daniel Graves, James Montgomery**
Roy Scheider, Martin Luther, Sinbad
- 12 **James Craig Walter Walker**
Neil Young, Rodin, Charles Manson
- 16 **Joelle Pippen**
W.C. Handy, Tiberius Caesar, Burgess Meredith
- 19 **William Westerman**
Jodie Foster, Indira Gandhi, Ted Turner
- 22 **Thomas Rowland**
Jamie Lee Curtis, Bach, Tarzan
- 28 **Robert Bradshaw Clay Robbins**
William Blake, Frederick Engels, Berry Gordy Jr.
- 29 **Russel Redoch**
Christian Doppler, Louisa May Alcott, C. S. Lewis
- 30 **Richard Emmel**
Jonathan Swift, Samuel Clemens, Bo Jackson



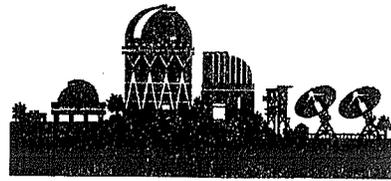
Mensan Anniversaries

- 22years **Richard Turner**
- 19 years **Peggy Tibbs**
- 18 years **Msgt. Jacqueline Wallace**
- 17 years **Majorie LeClair**
- 16 years **Alice Fleming**
- 15 years **Deb'Y S. Gaj Lois Krantz**
- 13 years **Steven Cooper**
- 12 years **Shawn Smith**
- 4 years **Charles Finnell**
- 3 years **Harve Thorn III**



The Sky this Month

By Duke Heath



A Christmas gift is in store for sky watchers in December! On Christmas day the moon passes in front of the sun for a great partial solar eclipse. In Arkansas the eclipse begins around 9:40 in the morning and peaks at 11:00. CAUTION! Do not look at the sun with the naked eye. Total blindness can occur in a fraction of a second if the sun is accidentally viewed thru binoculars. Indirect viewing is the only way to go unless you have the proper sun filters. Just punch a hole thru some cardboard and let the light shine thru onto another piece of cardboard. Observe the second piece of cardboard with your back to the sun.

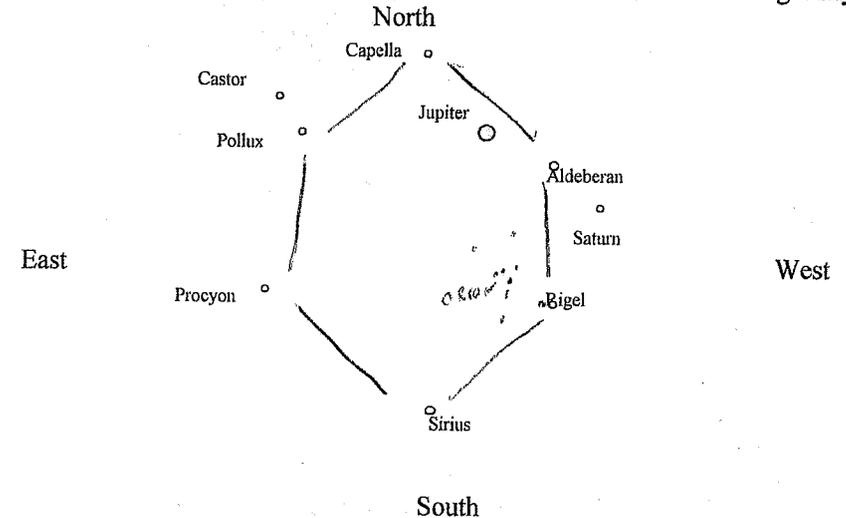
Of course, the big event in November is the Leonid meteor shower. Two years ago the shower came a day before anyone predicted and produced over 300 giant fireballs per hour. It was the most amazing, indescribable site I have ever seen. Last year, enough had been learned from the previous year that the predictions were extremely accurate. Areas of Europe and Asia got in excess of 5000 meteors an hour. By the time the shower got to the U.S., it had been reduced to about eighty per hour. The predictions are much the same this year, with next year being the great year for the U.S. But eighty meteors an hour is still worth staying up for. Watching the sky has been a fascination of mine since my earliest memories. One thing I have learned is that predictions are more often wrong than right. So be watching a few days before and after. The peak is on the morning of the 17th.

The winter sky has returned bringing with it the most beautiful collection of stars and planets in the sky. I am a believer that if you can name the stars you are looking at, your appreciation of the sky will be greatly enhanced.

When you look overhead with Orion at its highest point, you will see a gigantic hexagon made up of the stars Capella, Aldebaran, Rigel, Sirius, Procyon and Pollux. You should all know Rigel, which is the lower right foot of Orion. Capella should be directly overhead as you view Orion. It is the bright and northern most star in the hexagon. As you point to Capella and start slowly going toward Jupiter, (the brightest object in the hexagon) you will come across a "V" with the brightest star at the junction of the "V". This is Aldebaran. The "V" is the sub constellation Hyades. To the north west of the Hyades one can see the most photographed object in the night sky, other than the moon. It appears as a tiny dipper. These are the Seven Sisters or the Pleiades. The bright star to the west of the Hyades is the planet Saturn. These two planets are breathtaking through a scope. Continue with your hexagon to Rigel, then on to the brightest star in the sky, Sirius.

Though it is one of the rarest metals, gold was the first one discovered.

Simus is at the bottom of our hexagon as Capella is at the top. So come up to the next star and you have Procyon. Pollux is the star between Procyon and Capella in our hexagon. The star in conjunction with Pollux is its twin Castor. You are now in the constellation Gemini. The best way to remember this hexagon is with the following pneumatic. CAPtain ALL Derigging Seems PROperly POLished. As simple as it seems, it is what I still use for this wonderful area of the night sky.



Mensa Arkansas loses a long time member

James C. Fuller was retired from Western Union after 30 years of service. Upon retirement, he became a contract mail carrier for the Jerusalem, AR route. Throughout his life he was interested in aviation, he was a private pilot with instructor rating, and owned several different planes. Mr. Fuller was an inventor (one patent and several projects in progress) and a proud member of Mensa Arkansas. He is survived by his parents, two children, three sisters, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. James was born 1/15/1941 and died on 9/18/2000. Mr. Fuller's son Monte contacted me with this information after finding my e-mail address among Mr. Fuller's Mensa material.

A shrimp has more than one hundred pairs of chromosomes in its nucleus. Man has only twenty-three.



Garlic: A clove a day keeps cancer away. Eating a lot of garlic--but not garlic supplements--seems to protect against stomach and colorectal cancer, investigators report.

Based on six studies, the findings suggest that "high consumption of raw or cooked garlic decreases the risk of colorectal cancer up to 50%. The risk of stomach cancer was cut in half for those who consumed the most garlic. The studies also found that consumption of garlic supplements did not decrease cancer risk. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2000;72:1047-1052.

Fiber supplement may increase cancer risk. A new study shows that a form of fiber supplement taken by millions of people may increase the risk of colon cancer. French researchers report that supplements of one type of fiber -- ispaghula husk, a compound similar to psyllium that is not part of the average diet -- appear to increase polyps, or adenomas, from which colorectal cancer develops. The risk is even higher if the supplement is taken along with high amounts of calcium, which is supposed to prevent colon cancer. The evidence of several recent studies seems to indicate that fiber may not have the protective effect against colon cancer that has previously been regarded as fact. *The Lancet*, Oct. 14, 2000

Stem cells help treat brain tumors. Neural stem cells hold promise as a treatment for a particularly aggressive form of brain cancer, glioblastoma. A study has shown injection with stem

cells greatly boosts the survival of mice with the brain tumors. Ninety days after the injections, 6 out of 7 mice treated with the modified stem cells were still alive, compared with none of the mice who did not receive any stem cells. The stem cells are likely to spread throughout the central nervous system, as tumor cells tend to do.

April issue of the journal *Nature Medicine*

Stem cell transplants treat spine damage in rats. Transplanted brain stem cells can repair spinal cord damage in rats, researchers report. The rats had a type of spine damage that people can develop after having radiotherapy for cancer.

Rats whose spinal cord had been irradiated were injected with stem cells at the site of the injury. Five months later all rats that were not injected were paralyzed, but, 35% of the injected rats showed no sign of injury. *European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology Conference in Istanbul*

Stem cells from body fat--limitless supply. In the midst of the debate over whether stem cells should be harvested from embryos, researchers have found what could be a "limitless" stem-cell supply--the ever-growing fat deposits of the human body.

In cell culture experiments, investigators found they could coax primitive fat cells to grow into bone cells, suggesting that fat could someday provide stem cells that can develop into a range of body tissue

One man Isaac Newton transformed the world by 1687 with his fundamental discovery: the method of calculus, which is the basis for much of modern mathematics; the spectral composition of light; the fundamentals of optics; the law of universal gravitation and the basic laws of mechanics. Newton was twenty three years old.

A Few Thoughts

by Duke Heath



Greeting, all. I had planned to use UFO's as a theme this month, but I did not for the contributions on the subject I had expected. There were a few Mensans that had indeed been abducted by aliens. These lady Mensans are still carrying on a torrid affair with the same alien that abducted them. But there was just nothing out of the ordinary. For this reason, I chose a more important subject as a theme, stem cell research.

I check the health wire daily for the latest and most interesting stories. A story just hit the wire today that, hopefully, will render the whole stem cell debate moot. Check out the *News From Medicine* this month. The last article (stem cells and fat) holds tremendous promise for stem cell research.

Do you and I will be administering the Mensa matter on National Testing Day at UGA. I am hoping for a substantial turnout. If any of you would like to help, please give one of us a call.

A special thank you to Don Wyatt. The *Jimmy Kimmel* is great, as usual, this month. We have a great newsletter, and Don is a big part of it. Thanks also to Delynn, Gary Wood, and Charles Plagnol for their contributions.

Encourage you to include a picture with your submissions. It helps to have a face to put with names. Since I am a total recluse, there will be no pictures of me. To help you get to know me, however, I will publish a picture of a different person each month that has had a great deal of influence on my life. The person I have chosen this month has had a tremendous influence on my life and the way I view the world.

Is anyone interested in meeting at a certain time each week in the Yahoo chess room for some Mensa Arkansas chess? If so, let me know. We could set a certain time each week and meet in a stated chess room to play and talk. It would be great to get several of us in the same room.

In order for me to keep my interest up enough to continue this job, I need input from you. *Californica* is welcome. The March issue will end my second year as editor. I am undecided as to whether or not to make the March issue my last. I need input to help me decide to continue for another year or not. Please let me know if the group is ready for new blood.

As usual, we need to hear your thoughts on this issue. I would also like suggestions on future themes.

I wish all of you a wonderful, happy, and safe holiday season.



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