



mensa international journal

ij extra supplement

september 2006 issue number 498

John Maalouf...New York lawyer

John was born in Boston, Massachusetts and relocated to New York in 1994, after completing his LL.M. in International Banking and Financial Services Law from Boston University School of Law. John's wife Alice is also a member of Mensa, and they have four wonderful children (future Mensans) two girls and two boys.



During his school days, John had a keen interest in physics, and discovered that time does indeed move more slowly when faced with mindless busywork. Unfortunately, like many Mensans, his primary and high school's curriculum focused extensively on memorizing and regurgitating facts and put little value on creative or intelligent thinking. John attended college at Boston University, studying physics and economics and developing a strong interest in Taoism, Buddhism and in the martial arts.

While in law school, John took up sky-diving and hang-gliding to help alleviate some of the boredom associated with his required classes. According to John, "If at first you don't succeed, sky-diving probably isn't for you". After graduating law school and entering the workplace, John was pleased to find out that the ability to think creatively and to see solutions that others could not was valued by a fair segment of the business world. He worked at large law firms, rising through the ranks and focused his legal practice on financial law, which he found to be the most interesting.

After several years, John became recognized as

an expert in the areas of international finance, trade, banking and corporate law, and has represented clients in numerous high profile matters involving international trade finance, IPO's, M&A's, director and officer liability, international banking, and foreign investment in China. His cases have been featured on the American television programs *60 Minutes* and *20/20* as well as being on CNN and in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Most recently, the *United States Lawyer Rankings* for the year 2006 were released and John was ranked #5 in the United States in the area of "International Trade and Finance Lawyers". According to John: "behind every successful man is a shocked mother-in-law" and his case is no exception to this rule.

What John enjoys most about his practice of law is being approached by a client with a complicated matter which other firms have stated "can't be done" and is "impossible", and then finding a new and creative way to make it happen.

When John is not practising law or spending time with his family, he enjoys practising martial arts, studying traditional Shaolin Kung-Fu with 34th generational monks from the Shaolin Temple of Henan Province, China, who relocated to New York many years ago.

John joined Mensa for the intellectual stimulation it provides and enjoys interacting with fellow Mensans, whether over a game of 3-dimensional chess or for a friendly discussion regarding world economics.

If you would like to contact John, he can be reached at: john.maalouf@maalouf.us, www.maalouf.us, or Direct Dial: 212 789 8709

John was ranked #5 in the United States in the area of "International Trade and Finance Lawyers" in 2006.

mensans in the news.



supplementally science

John Blinke

Unwelcome Bed Mates

Harvard Health Letter, June 2006, p. 7.
Buggy Bedfellows.

Infestations by bedbugs are a growing problem in the U.S. No one is sure why the little suckers are becoming so common. But, at least they don't seem to spread dangerous diseases the way mosquitoes do.

However, they can cause allergic reactions. And, nobody likes the idea of having their blood sucked while they sleep. Not every home-invading critter is a bedbug. Before calling an exterminator, it is smart to find out what you are dealing with. You can find useful information at www.hsph.harvard.edu/bedbugs. The site includes forms you can use to send in suspicious insects for identification.

Hot Times

Science Now, 26 May 2006. *New forecast: Hot and Hotter* (Geophysical Research Letters.)

Computer models of climate change indicate that temperatures will rise modestly in the next hundred years. But, when additional factors are added to the computations, the models project larger effects. They had predicted a global temperature rise of about 5.8 degrees Celsius by the end of the century.

But, new studies done at two different universities indicate that, when allowance is made for feedback effects like degrading soil and changing ocean chemistry, the temperature rise can be as much as 8.0 degrees Celsius. The researchers also used data from ice cores to estimate CO₂ levels and temperatures over the past 420,000 years, and during the Little Ice Age, between 1550 and 1850.

Smooth Sailing

Nature, 6 April 2006, p. 754. *The Rough With the Smooth.* (Physical Review Letters.)

When engineers want to reduce drag, they frequently try to use the smoothest surface possible. However, this might not be the best idea in every case. Smooth surfaces produce laminar flows. That's good. But laminar flows can be unstable — becoming turbulent rather quickly. And, turbulence causes drag. It is known that bumpy surfaces can have less drag than smooth ones, but experiments demonstrating this have been difficult to replicate. This is because the size, shape, and geometric pattern of the bumps are critical for drag reduction. A properly designed bumpy surface can delay the onset of turbulence, potentially leading to faster cars and quieter submarines, among other things.

Causing Mad Cow

Science Now, 31 May 2006. *Mad Cows and Metals.*

We know that prion diseases like 'mad cow' and scrapie can be transmitted from one animal to another. But, sometimes such diseases seem to appear spontaneously. It has not been clear what might cause this. Scientists at the Free University of Berlin have now shown that metals might be the cause. Working with yeast cells, they found that they could cause prions to flip to their deadly, insoluble form by adding copper or manganese to the cultures. Next, they will have to find out if this can happen in mammals, as well as yeast cells. If so, it will explain why prion diseases seem more common in places where the soil contains manganese or copper, like Iceland, Slovakia, and Colorado.

John Blinke,
PO Box 80242
Rochester MI
48308-0242 or
johnb44221@cs.com



books... with tom elliot

Tom Elliott is a marketing director, talent agent, and writer who is a member of the Boston chapter of US Mensa.

All books reviewed in this column are by Mensan authors.

FEMININE PREROGATIVES: 3 Tales of Empowerment by Louise Jaffe (2006 250 pp., pb.; publ. Xlibris, Philadelphia PA 19113, ISBN 1-4257-1098-0); also available in hardcover. Now here's something a bit more provocative: a trilogy of novellas – Lies: A Chorus, Faustina's Upward Fall, and Journeynotes, each featuring a different woman and unified by a focus on feminine choices. Lies: A Chorus is a 'fairy tale in reverse' that chronicles the experiences of April Carter and how class, race, and gender impact her upward mobility in our society. Faustina's Upward Fall is a humorous telling of the struggles of a writer, Faustina Cohen, to get published. And Journeynotes tells of Shirley Stone's experiences with journalizing and writing poetry. One reviewer, a singer/songwriter/poet/artist, commented, "I've cried with April Carter, ached with Faustina, and both mourned and rejoiced with Shirley Stone".



ABANDONED ON BATAAN: One Man's Story of Survival by Oliver "Red" Allen, as told to Mildred Allen (2002, 248 pp., footnotes, appendices, pb.; publ. Crimson Horse Entertainment and Publishing, Boerne TX 78006, ISBN 0-9713184-1-7). "We're the battling bastards of Bataan/No mama, no papa, no Uncle Sam/No aunts, no uncles, no nephews, no nieces/No pills, no planes, no artillery pieces/...And nobody gives a damn!" Most of us have heard of "The Bataan Death March" and are familiar with the horrors thereof, but that was only the beginning. After the 6-day, 75-mile march, during which many died, they were shepherded into dank cells, fed abominable food, tortured – and subjected to biological experiments the extent of which

they knew little until many years later. Yet Oliver managed to maintain his sense of humor, and he and his comrades pulled off many tricks under the noses of their Japanese guards, from small successes to outright sabotage. An interesting sidelight is that the Smothers Brothers father was interred in the same camp.

COLLEGE COUNTDOWN: A Planning Guide for High School Students (Revised 5th Edition) by Helen Heron (1989-2006, 160 pp. illustrations, index, bibliographies, pb.; publ. Heron Publishing, Oceanside CA, ISBN 1-880639-28-9). It might be too late to do you much good for this fall, but there's always next year. Topics include reviewing and choosing between courses of study, preparing your senior year resume, honing your study skills, selecting a college, applying for admission, using the Internet, addressing disability concerns, and analyzing your options for financial aid. And you get a handy countdown calendar to ensure that you complete what you need to do in a timely manner.



ANGUISHED ENGLISH, PUNS SPOOKEN HERE: Word Play for Halloween, HAVE YOURSELF A PUNNY LITTLE CHRISTMAS: Word Play for the Holidays, and GET THEE TO A PUNNERY by Richard Lederer – Just a word to let you know that Gibbs Smith, Publisher, Layton UT 84041, is re-issuing some of Richard's tomes in new, mini-pocketbook-sized (4.25" x 6.75") editions, revised, expanded, and updated.



Reflections on the Diamond

Nine months after Mensa was founded in Oxford, two remarkable incidents took place. On June 28, 1947 the author of the text you are now reading, was born in a small town in the South of the Netherlands. A few days later a strange - if not alien - vessel crashed near the town of Roswell, New Mexico. Any meaningful connections? I'm still not sure. But I've got your attention now, I hope!

I joined Dutch Mensa in the summer of 1979 and have been a proud and active member ever since. I've had the privilege and pleasure of chairing the ExCom of Dutch Mensa in 1983, 1990 and 1991, I was Mensa International's Gifted Children Program Coordinator in 1991, attended hundreds of meetings all over the world and have organised dozens myself. Over the years I have met thousands of members and partied and worked with the best of them. Mensa has provided me with exhilarating experiences and great fun and being proactive in the organisation has taught me many valuable and important lessons.

Among other things I have found that most Mensans are shy, often because they have learned to be wary of others. But if you succeed in breaking the barrier, you'll be rewarded by eruptions of talent and good will. Unfortunately these eruptions seldom last long - to keep them going is a skill that has to be learned. And perhaps that is the reason why our potentially brilliant conglomerate of over 100,000 gifted minds is still underachieving after six decades.

Mensa is both a badly needed haven and a fantastic playground for its members and

this alone justifies its continued existence. But as a diamond with over 100,000 facets, it hasn't even begun to shine in my opinion.

I'm not the first to state this and I'm convinced that many of you agree. Many members have left Mensa disappointed, many others have adapted downwards by not expecting too much. Michael Shermer, the founder of the Skeptics movement, in his book *Why People Believe Weird Things* quotes psychologist David Perkins who has found a strong positive correlation between high intelligence and ideological immunity. We may listen to each other but we are hard to convince and tend to stick to our beliefs.

However, turning away or giving up hope and ambition does not help. If Mensa has a ghost of a chance to ever realise its promise and potential, it can only come about when every one of us chooses for consciously exploring and developing his or her giftedness and learning to co-operate with others. This is a very hard thing to do, a tremendous challenge. If you want to know how, read *The Outsiders*, by Grady Towers (you'll find the article -and plenty more- on www.eskimo.com/~miyaguch/hoeflin.html).

In this, the year of Mensa's 60th anniversary, I urge you to reconsider your position and join the ranks of those who not only contribute but by doing so learn to overcome and transcend themselves. Do not cherish your woes. Sublimate, gifted mate!

Just imagine what a great time we will all have then!

Edu H. Braat

“But as a diamond with over 100,000 facets, it hasn't even begun to shine...”