



Tampa Bay Sounding

A Publication of Tampa Bay Mensa

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**A Publication of
Tampa Bay Mensa**

Tampa Bay Sounding (USPS 305-830)
Tampa Bay Mensa
5001 Terrace Palms Cir Unit 101
Temple Terrace, FL 33617

Mensa is an international society whose sole qualification for membership is a score at or above the 98th percentile on a standard IQ test. Mensa is a not-for-profit organization whose main purpose is to serve as a means of communication and assembly for its members. All opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors, and not necessarily those of the editors or officers of Mensa. Mensa as an organization has no opinions. Tampa Bay Mensa serves Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, and Sumter counties.

Visit American Mensa at:
<http://www.us.mensa.org>



For full instructions on how to join *tbm-gm* and *tbm-discussion*, our two Yahoo! groups, visit TBM at

<http://tampa.us.mensa.org>

Submission Guidelines

Tampa Bay Sounding encourages submissions from all members. Submissions must be signed, but names may be withheld or pseudonyms used if requested. All letters to the editor will be subject to publication unless the author specifically requests otherwise. All material submitted will be considered for publication, but nothing can be guaranteed. Everything is subject to editing. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Articles, casual essays, opinion pieces, poems, short stories, puzzles, and artwork are all encouraged.
- Personal attacks and bigoted, sexist, hateful, or otherwise offensive material will not be published.
- E-mail submissions are preferred, either embedded or in Word-readable attachments. Computer printouts and typewritten pages are fine. If you submit hard copy, please make sure your printer has enough toner or your typewriter has a fresh-enough ribbon. Legible handwritten submissions will be considered (but not given preference).

You may send your submissions by either of the following means:

E-mail: editor@tampa.us.mensa.org

(Please indicate "TBM" in the subject header.)

U.S. Mail: Ronan Heffernan, 27504 Breakers Dr, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

Unless otherwise specified in the calendar, the deadline for unsolicited contributions is the fifth day of the month.

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Welcome to Tampa Bay Mensa!

* Amanda DeWeese	John Scheldt	Robbie Smith
Andre Cote	* John Georgiades	Ronnie Driscoll
Ann Abbott	Kenneth Sweeney	Scott McInnes
* Cameryn Conley	Matthew Pimentel	Sprague Owings
Casimer Marks	* Michael Neal	* Tia Smith
Debra Hartland	* Nicholas Panuthos	Wendy Coughlin
Jacqueline Hayes	Paul Albury	William Howard
James Crum	R Warren Andrews	William Ash
* Jean Heffern	Randall Greene	* New members.

May Birthdays

05/01	Lynette Pittman
05/02	Pamela Farnsworth
05/03	Eloise Hurst, Michael Heckler
05/04	Edwin Tucker, Ferdinand Pointer
05/05	Patrick O'Neil, Jim Forsyth, David Dockery, Thomas Timberlake
05/06	Linda Christina
05/08	Jean Waters, Todd Tokish
05/10	Lewis Prichard, Sprague Owings
05/11	Debra Hartland
05/12	Allison Jirsa
05/13	Dennis Pashoukos, Eduardo Buenviaje
05/14	Kay Shapiro, Kenneth Louis
05/15	Rosalynn Solomon, James Herson, Todd Jennings, Warren Andrews
05/17	Paul Sutcliffe
05/18	William Howard
05/19	Catherine Knowles
05/20	Sandra Kischuk
05/22	Joseph Lucas
05/23	Timothy Johnson, Rebecca Sinnreich, John Turnbull
05/27	John Copeland
05/28	Susan Gardner, Sheldon Livingston Jr, Christopher Orozco
05/30	Harsha Setty, Barry Siegfried, James Kelley

Margarita Bay 2016

Sylvia Zadorozny

It's almost time for our 2016 Regional Gathering (RG), and we're getting excited!

The RG is easily Tampa Bay Mensa's biggest event of the year – last year we had about 140 attendees, with Mensans joining us from all over Florida and beyond. If you've never attended an RG, come check it out!

Our RG committee has been working hard to line up all sorts of wonderful programs, interesting speakers, competitive tournaments, and casual fun games. We have a 24-hour hospitality suite, where you can grab a snack and shoot the breeze with other smarties, any time day or night. With a theme of Margarita Bay, we're renting margarita machines to freely dispense delicious drinks (for those 21 & over), as well as non-alcoholic slushies for those who don't imbibe. All meals (except Saturday dinner-on-the-town) are included with registration.

One of our featured programs is real live animals from Lowry Park Zoo, with handlers to teach us all about them. I'm not sure which critters the zoo will bring us this year, but in the past they've brought a serval, baby alligator, toucan, opossum, giant frog, singing dog, exotic snake, and (this being Mensa) owls. Their programs are always loads of fun, and educational too!

Some of our other scheduled programs this year include:

- Jack Brawner's legendary Treasure Hunt, with his diabolically difficult brain benders
- Bill Keevan's Scotch and cider tastings to tease our palates
- Karaoke (let's sing!) with Art & Sapir Schwartz
- "Bio-engineering" by Steve Maranz
- Morning Yoga with Lisa Blair
- Arts & Crafts with Theresa Hohmann
- Pun-Off (share your favorite pun)
- "Sexual Deviants" presented by Dave Bryant
- 3-D People Bingo with David Fleming
- Beginning Knitting with Nora Foust
- Sylvia's chocolate orgy (mmm!)
- Reverse Charades
- Surprise presentations by Bonnie Wilpon and Clifton Butts
- And Kevin Brawner has scheduled lots of tournaments for gamers – Texas Hold 'Em, Lords of Waterdeep, Boggle, Dominion, THE Game, Hearts, Settlers of Catan, Cranium, Fictionary, Dominoes, D&D, and Ticket to Ride.



All this fun takes place Memorial Day weekend, 5/26 - 5/30. (It's a 3-day weekend, extending from Friday evening through Monday noon.) To easily accommodate everyone, we've rented the whole Lakeside Convention

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RVC Column for Region 10

Thomas G Thomas

The American Mensa Committee (AMC) met on the weekend of March 19 in San Antonio, Texas, and besides several presentations that were offered, there were only a handful of motions passed: A change in the new member subsidy from \$5 to \$1 per member (to be replaced by a new Local Group support proposal), approval of the 2016-2017 budget, approval of an amendment to the National Publication Guidelines to move responsibility for handbooks and guides from the Communication Committee to the Leadership Development Committee, and creation of a recognition program for community service at both the national and local level. There was also a motion to create a search committee for candidates for the AMC, but after numerous amendments were proposed, the motion was tabled until the need was demonstrated and/or clarified. I hope and expect that Election Committee Chair Megan Edwards will have some input on that. A video of the meeting may be viewed by visiting www.us.mensa.org/lead/amc/meeting-reports/, selecting 2016-03-19 – San Antonio, and clicking Video Recording. (Warning: the video is 7 hours long, and it's not as fun as binge-watching Netflix...) There will be a teleconference on May 18 where the minutes will be put to a vote, and they will probably be posted shortly after that.

As usual, the most interesting presentation was on the results of the latest Membership Survey (which starts at 4:43 in the aforementioned video). The results are too long to outline here, but there are some interesting points that jump out. One, our Net Promoter Score (NPS) increased since the last survey. (The NPS ties to the question "How likely is it that you would recommend Mensa to a friend?") Bulletins and Local Group Newsletters are still identified as the two most important and satisfying benefits. Our new members are 65% Millennials and Homeland (Gifted Youth), while our leaders are 78% Boomer and GenX. The top reasons new members join is for intellectual stimulation, to meet intelligent people, and for intellectual validation, and 45% of new members are very or extremely satisfied, while only 20% are slightly or not at all satisfied. Recommended actions from the survey are to diversify events to meet the expectations of new members, while welcoming and engaging new members as they join.

Finally, I should explain why I've been absent for the past few months. Last May, my mother passed away unexpectedly, and I had been working with my brothers on dealing with her estate. In order to stay connected with my other responsibilities, I detached somewhat and didn't really process the loss. Then in October, my second youngest brother was diagnosed with stage 4 esophageal cancer, and he passed away in November on the day he was released from the hospital. Two days prior to his passing, my youngest brother was diagnosed with stage 3 lung cancer. After undergoing chemo and radiation he seemed to be doing much better – until the beginning of March when he suddenly passed away as well.

I don't bring this up to seek sympathy or advice – to be honest, I don't respond to either one very well. But detachment stopped working; grief is a selfish emotion that doesn't serve anyone, but it will demand its due, and over the past year I wound up in a tailspin that affected

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Margarita Bay 2016 (cont)

Center, adjacent to the Tampa Stadium Hotel, on Dale Mabry Highway in Tampa. The hotel address is 4750 N Dale Mabry, just north of the Raymond James Stadium, south of Hillsborough Avenue, on the west side of the street. (It's slightly hidden behind a restaurant.) Parking is free and plentiful.

For those of you staying over, which I highly recommend to absorb the full 24-hour Mensa RG experience, Tampa Stadium Hotel rooms are just \$89 a night. Please mention Tampa Bay Mensa when you make your reservation – we promised the hotel room-nights to help negotiate a discount on renting the convention center facilities.

For those of you on a tighter budget, there is also an EconoLodge, just south of the Tampa Stadium Hotel. Rooms there are only \$69 a night. Again please mention Tampa Bay Mensa when you make your reservation. (Both hotels are owned by the same enterprise, so we get credit for rooms at either location.)

If you're new to RGs and not ready to commit to a full weekend, you can drop in for just a day. The day rate (\$60) includes catered food, speakers, hospitality, games, and margaritas. Kids 12 and under pay half the adult rate.

Finally, as a heads-up for next year, the 2017 Mensa Annual Gathering (AG) will be in Hollywood, Florida, around the end of June / beginning of July, roughly a month after Memorial Day weekend. A few of us here are involved with planning the 2017 AG, which is similar to an RG, but on a much larger scale (and more expensive). During Tampa Bay Mensa Executive Committee meetings, future gatherings were discussed, and as it now stands, it looks like Tampa Bay Mensa will probably not offer a Regional Gathering next year – the RG/AG timing is just too close. So if you skip this year's RG, you may have to wait two years, until 2018, before Tampa Bay Mensa hosts another RG. (Broward Mensa is also not offering an RG next year.)

So don't wait. Join us this year, and let's make Margarita Bay 2016 an RG we'll remember fondly for years to come.

See you there! ☺

RVC Column for Region 10 (cont)

my work, health, and all other aspects of my life. But by this point I've resolved most of the health issues, and my remaining brother is quite healthy. So I'm ready to get back to work, and expect to be visiting the local groups again soon.

One last personal note, and I hope you'll take it in the spirit it's offered: If you smoke, please quit. That's all. Thank you. ■

Mensaversaries

46 years	Allen Garber
39 years	John Evan
37 years	Marilyn Wolf
36 years	John Woerner
35 years	Michelle Stencel, Christopher Clement
32 years	Bruce Bohnker
30 years	Sylvia Zadorozny, Sandra Sorenson
29 years	Joanna Gili, Penny Levin
27 years	Gerri Almand, Janet Darmanin
26 years	Rudolph Trosin
25 years	Roland St Marie
24 years	James Brower
22 years	Rick Craig
21 years	Anne Murray
18 years	Chris Hachey
17 years	Audrey Silver
16 years	John Scheldt, John Cattel
15 years	James Clack, Geoff LeCain
14 years	Charles Godfrey
13 years	Larry Paradis
12 years	Spencer Young, Keith Lussen, Catherine Hall
11 years	Don Davis, Laurel Moore
10 years	Devin Statham, Mary Lou Clark, Edwin Smith
7 years	Scott Kurland
6 years	Kenneth Kline, Tristan Goodrich
5 years	Brian Terjung, William Allen
4 year	Caitlyn Doel, Logan Laxton, Joseph Nolan
3 years	Drew Meyerson, Edwin Tucker, Connor Stec, Julee Vance
2 years	Peter Grarup, Kiera Wells, Paul Smith, Jim Hawkins, Alison Work
1 years	Sebastian Serrano, Bruce Perrin, Caitlyn Browning, Autumn Drittler, Caitlin Camm, Shawn Dean, Victoria Humphrey, Charles Jeffrey, Liam Buttner

Note: Years are for continuous membership. Members who let their membership lapse start from the date of reinstatement.

Calendar of Events

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 » Reading Group	5 » Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 » Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	13	14 » Games Night
15	16	17	18 » Reading Group	19 » Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	20	21
22	23	24	25	26 » Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	27 » RG 2016, Margarita Bay	28 » RG 2016, Margarita Bay » TLC
29 » RG 2016, Margarita Bay	30 » RG 2016, Margarita Bay	31				

For updated event information, check our online calendar: <http://tampa.us.mensa.org/cal>

May 2016 Calendar

Except for rare cases that hosts will make clear, all events listed in our Calendar of Events, whether hosted in private homes or public venues, are open to all Mensans, their spouses, and accompanied guests.

While kitty amounts are mandatory, hosts often spend far more than the specified amount. Donations in excess of the kitty amount will be appreciated. If you have special needs or restrictions, it is prudent to discuss them with your host before attending an event.

May 4 7pm Reading Group

Location: IHOP, 4910 West Spruce Street, Tampa

Read whatever you like and bring books you'd like to recommend, discuss, exchange, or give away.

Ronan Heffernan 727-537-6626 ronansan@gmail.com

May 5 12:30pm Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes

Location: Sweet Tomatoes on Dale Mabry just South of Bearss

For directions, descriptions, and/or encouragement to attend, contact: Dave Bryant

May 12 12:30pm Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes

May 14 7pm Games Night

Location: 651 Timber Bay Circle West, Oldsmar

We play fun board and table games. Snacks and sodas provided (\$2 kitty helps defray refreshment expenses). No smoking indoors.

Sylvia Holt Zadorozny 813-855-4939 sylviachocolate@gmail.com

May 18 7pm Reading Group

May 19 12:30pm Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes

May 26 12:30pm Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes

May 27 – May 30 RG 2016: MaRGarita Bay

Location: Lakeside Convention Center and Tampa Stadium Hotel, 4750 N Dale Mabry

See pages 4, 10, and 11 for details

May 28 5pm TLC

Location: RG 2016: Margarita Bay

It's time to Tape, Label, and Chat, as we prepare the next issue of *Tampa Bay*

Sounding for mailing. Come help out and be one of the first to get the latest issue.

Lisa & Bryce Blair 813-907-2418 distribution@tampa.us.mensa.org

MaRGarita Bay 2016 Schedule

MaRGarita Bay, Tampa Bay Mensa's annual Regional Gathering, is coming soon! May 27 - 30 at the Tampa Stadium Hotel on Dale Mabry!

Online Registration is now available: <http://tampa.us.mensa.org/regform.php>

This year's tentative schedule:

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.		Continental Breakfast	Continental Breakfast	Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.				
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.				
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.		Arts & Crafts I	Arts & Crafts II	RVC Wrap
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.				
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.		Morning Yoga with Lisa	TBD	Pun-Off
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.				
10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.		Lunch	Lunch	Awards Lunch
11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.				
11:30 a.m. - noon				
noon - 12:30 p.m.				
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.				
1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	RG Setup	Lowry Park Zoo Animal Event (w/setup and tear down)	Introduction to Knitting	
1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.				
2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.				
2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.				
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Registration Opens	Clifton Butts' presentation	Jack's Treasure Hunt	
3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.				
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Dinner	TLC (Newsletter)	Bonnie's Presentation	
4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.				
5:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.				
5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	3D People Bingo	Dinner on the Town (Choco-Orgy in Hosp)	Dinner	
6:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.				
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Reverse Charades	Sexual Deviants - Criminology	Lifetime / Longtime Reception	
7:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.				
7:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Karaoke	Bill's Scotch Tasting	Bill's Cider/Wine Tasting	
8:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.				
8:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.				
9:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.				
9:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.				
10:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.				

MaRGarita Bay Games Schedule

While there are excellent scheduled events planned for the entire MaRGarita Bay 2016 weekend, there are always games available too!

Mix and match your weekend between games and events.

The tentative RG Games schedule:

	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
7:00 a.m. - 7:30 a.m.		Continental Breakfast	Continental Breakfast	Continental Breakfast
7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.				
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.				
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.		Lords of Waterdeep	Settlers of Catan Tournament	Ticket to Ride Tournament
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.				
9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.				
10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.				
10:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.		Lunch	Lunch	Awards Lunch
11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.				
11:30 a.m. - noon		RG Setup	Boggle Tournament	Cranium
noon - 12:30 p.m.				
12:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Dominion Tournament		Jack's Treasure Hunt	
1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.				
1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.				
2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Registration Opens		The Game	Fictionary
2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.				
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Dinner		Dinner on the Town (Choco-Orgy in Hosp)	Dinner
3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.				
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	(game setup)		(game setup)	(game setup)
4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.				
5:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Reverse Charades	Hearts Tournament	Dominoes Tournament (starts at 8:00 p.m.) D&D Session (starts at 10:00 p.m.)	
5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.				
6:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament			
6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.				
7:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.				
7:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.				
8:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.				
8:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.				
9:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.				
9:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.				
10:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.				

Call for Candidates

Tampa Bay Mensa 2016 Elections

The annual elections to fill open positions on the Tampa Bay Mensa Executive Committee will be held in July this year, to make sure that candidates have time to submit their petitions despite this Call for Candidates being late. The terms of five members of the Executive Committee will expire in 2016. Four of these openings are for a two-year term and one opening is for a one-year term. Adult members are invited to pursue one of these leadership positions in our organization.

Executive Committee meetings are held six times each year. Officers enjoy the satisfaction that comes from being “in” on what is going on in the chapter, leaving their mark on these activities, and, of course, the great camaraderie that comes from associating with fellow members.

Interested members may contact the Election Supervisor to clarify any details of the election process. Candidates are responsible for fulfilling all requirements as prescribed in the bylaws of Tampa Bay Mensa contained in the Member Handbook and this Call for Candidates.

Our Election Supervisor is:

Maran Fulvi
3422 Hilltop Cir
Spring Hill, FL 34606
727-421-4728
election@tampa.us.mensa.org

Adult members in good standing of Tampa Bay Mensa seeking seats on the Executive Committee in the upcoming election must provide to the Elections Supervisor no later than Tuesday, May 31st:

- 1) a nominating petition, and
- 2) a campaign statement

Nominating petitions must contain the printed name, address, telephone number and signature of the candidate, plus the printed names and signatures of five (5) members in good standing as defined by the bylaws of Tampa Bay Mensa. Campaign statements must be limited to 250 words. Note that since campaign statements will be printed in *Tampa Bay Sounding* they must comply with current editorial policy. Petitions and campaign statements must be mailed to Maran Fulvi at the address listed above.

**Petition to Nominate _____ for
Tampa Bay Mensa Executive Committee**

Petition summary and background

We, the undersigned active members of Tampa Bay Mensa, support placing the candidate named below on the ballot for the 2016 Tampa Bay Mensa Executive Committee election.

Candidate information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone _____

Candidate Signature: _____

Name	Signature

Petition must be submitted by May 31, 2016 to Election Supervisor Maran Fulvi, 3422 Hilltop Cir Spring Hill, FL 34606 If you have any questions, feel free to contact Maran at 727-421-4728 or election@tampa.us.mensa.org

The Quiddity of Wealth and Money

Ronnie Dubs

I'm often amused hearing the political left, including some Mensans, talk about seizing money from the rich to pay for their utopian daydreams. They speak in a naive, almost childlike manner, as if we can just go take what others have earned – then have some massive bureaucracy pass it around in fair equitable manner, without stealing most of it themselves. As if giving someone what they've not earned will make them a better, happier person.

According to Wikipedia, there's only 1.4 Trillion dollars total US currency in circulation worldwide – most of that in Federal Reserve Notes which are a promissory note backed by the full faith and credit of the US Government (yet thankfully not our gold reserves). The government is already bankrupted to the tune of over 20 trillion dollars, trillions more in unfunded pension obligations, as well as the multi-trillion debt taken on by the Federal Reserve – themselves propping up Wall St these last 7 years to make Obama seem a credible president. So I ask, just how much cash currency do they think they can get from “The Rich?” Enough to pay off this debt and put us on the road to solvency?

The rich aren't stupid. They understand the ephemeral nature of currency – a certain amount, which may buy a car one day, can't buy a loaf of bread the next. No, the rich don't sit on piles of currency waiting for the next socialist demagogue to promise more of it to the great unwashed masses. They own investments, properties, and things of value that will always be in demand, regardless of politics and the prevailing value of currency.

If currency cured poverty we could simply rain down hundred dollar bills across the nation and make everyone a millionaire, yet no one could afford anything. Currency itself is only valuable by its relative scarcity, and the amount of work it takes to obtain it. It is devalued for everyone by nonsense like minimum wage increases, corruption, and multi-million dollar lawsuits.

Most stores of wealth, like art, gold or property, are based on something being scarce, rare, and hard to obtain, and for that model to remain viable, there need be other rich people around, with plenty of currency, who desire those same objects. An Andy Warhol painting of a soup can may be worth millions, but only if there are people around with millions to buy it and a burning desire to own what no one else has, lest it revert to its true intrinsic value of a dollar-ninety-nine at a local flea market.

Most of the world's great wealth is in capitalist form of stock shares, bank accounts, bonds, and corporate ownership. But force Bill Gates to dump his Microsoft holdings, and everyone else will suffer as well – force people to sell bonds and it's the government which must pay them off in cash. Seize Ted Turner's vast Montana properties and disregard his private property rights, and what private property rights will anyone have in the end?

So how will these socialist demagogues get 'the money' from the rich? Will they seize their homes and bank accounts, rip the Picassos off the wall to sell on ebay, maybe force them to melt down their jewelry? Yes. government can punish the rich, but the question is, how will that help anyone else? ■

Richard Thaler's *Misbehaving*

Modern Economics (the one with its own special 'Nobel Prize') is, according to the author of this book, founded on an illusion, namely, the core belief that people are "Econs," rational agents, who "choose by optimizing. Of all the goods and services a family could buy, the family chooses the best one that it can afford. Furthermore, the beliefs upon which Econs make choices are assumed to be unbiased." Econs "choose on the basis of what economists call 'rational expectations.' If people starting new businesses, on average, believe that their chance of succeeding is 75%, then that should be a good estimate of the actual number that do succeed. Econs are not overconfident." (p. 5) This premise is joined by "the other major workhorse of economic theory... *equilibrium*."

Econs don't overeat. Econs don't buy gifts for birthdays and anniversaries. Oh, and Econs don't exist. (p. 348)

Thaler has spent an entire thirty-year career causing a paradigm-shift (pp. 167f.) in the discipline of Economics. He has dragged his profession, not exactly kicking and screaming but frequently acting quite snarkily, from the darkness of its fraudulent definitions into the bright sunshine of observation, hypothesis, prediction, and experiment.

The so-called "Chicago School" was, and still is, committed to a peculiar fantasy called *consumer sovereignty*, "the notion that people make good choices, and certainly better choices than anyone else could make for them." Thaler has persuaded an entire younger generation of economists to reject the Chicago School, stop studying Econs, and start studying Humans instead - Humans who make mistakes, obsess about sunk costs, get angry over perceived unfairness, and, in general, act with "bounded rationality and bounded self-control." (pp. 268f.)

Thaler and his colleague Cass Sunstein wrote an earlier book called *Nudge*, which described some of their efforts to achieve desirable ends by rearranging default settings. In this book Thaler recounts how that research was done and how the book came to be written. It's a hoot!

For example, early in his career Thaler decided to make the tests in his classes hard enough that he could tell which students were clearly superior, which were going to make it through to the end, and which needed help. The result was tests in which the median numerical grade was 72. The distribution of letter-grades was unchanged, but many of his students were upset, even enraged, by seeing such low numbers on their papers. So Thaler changed the scale and made 137 the top numerical score. After that, the median score became 100, and student complaints ceased. The distribution of letter-grades didn't change at all, but no one cared. For these were Humans, not Econs.

Another example: suppose you are shown four cards with the following letters and numbers on them:

A B 2 3

Continued on page 17

Cryptopoem

Sylvia Holt Zadorozny

R HAFUP PK NK HM SKED PKNFM —
WYP F WEKSU WREN TFUO RU PLA FZZIA PEAA,
FUN F WYPPAEGIM GIRPPAN FJEKTT PLA GRAIN,
FUN FII PLA IAFCAT SAEA JFIIRUO HA.
FUN PLA SRUN SAUP TROLRUO KCAE PLA IFUN
PKTTRUO PLA OEFTTAT PK FUN GEK,
FUN F EFRUWKS LAIN KYP RPT TLRURUO LFUN —
TK SLFP JKYIN R NK WYP IFYOL FUN OK?
~ ERJLFEN IAOFIIRAUUA

Answer to the April Cryptopoem:

*I find among the poems of Schiller
No mention of the caterpillar,
Nor can I find one anywhere
In Petrarch or in Baudelaire,
So here I sit in extra session
To give my personal impression.
The caterpillar, as it's called,
Is often hairy, seldom bald;
It looks as if it never shaves;
When as it walks, it walks in waves;
And from the cradle to the chrysalis
It's utterly speechless, songless, whistleless.
-Odgen Nash, "The Caterpillar"*

Member Book Review (cont)

Here's the question: which of the above cards must you turn over to verify whether every card with a vowel on one side has an even number on the other side? Econs would always get this right. Normal subjects, i.e., us Humans, often get it wrong. I leave it as an exercise for my Human readers.

Thaler's research affected the highest levels of government in the U.K. His work had uncovered many anomalies in the American financial sector, though much remains to be done. His stories are often hilarious, and name-dropping is almost his middle name: Daniel Kahnemann, Amos Tversky, and a half-dozen Nobel Laureates including Robert Shiller, along with students of his who have gone on to productive careers studying Human (behavioral) economics.

One interesting program of Thaler's had to do with encouraging people to put money away for retirement. It turned out to be quite helpful to make participating in a company's 401(k) automatic, i.e., the default setting, rather than requiring new employees to fill out and sign a separate form in order to participate. A representative of the Chicago School, by the way, declared this to be "paternalism." (p. 322)

There are two concepts conspicuously missing from this book: *advertising* and *moral hazard*. I wonder how it is that the Chicago School Boys, who insist that everyone automatically knows everything about their financial interests, don't argue that advertising is a complete waste of time. After all, in their view, the people who have a use for a product will know about it and buy it, and the people who have no use for it, won't. That's the essence of Econs.

And I believe that underlying the cry of "paternalism" is the belief that protecting people from their mistakes is morally hazardous because it prevents them from learning their lessons. When George W. Bush tried to privatize Social Security in 2005, he was trying to put control of people's retirement accounts in their own hands, partly so that those who made mistakes would suffer miserably in their old age and thus learn not to do that again.

14 pp. of notes, a 19 pp. bibliography, abundant illustrations, and an index, add to the value of this delightfully-written, substantial book that promises important help to people trying to live sensibly in a complex and confusing world. ■

Response to 100 Words

What was father's talent? Could he count as autistics count, accurately and instantly? Could he tell a joke to delight, or a story to beguile? Could he distinguish aromas or hues others found identical? Could he fly an airplane, mix a cocktail, draw a straight line? Could he sing?

Yes, that must be it. Father could sing his heart out, and by singing call forth the hearts of all who heard him. Father was a keening bird, a nightingale, a warbler, a maker of enchanting sounds. If he had been born a century later, he might have been Tony Bennett.

--Jim Perry

Serial Fillers

To round-out the page count for publication, here is some not-quite-random public domain content. If you would like to submit articles, stories, etc. for publication, please see the Submission Guidelines on page 2.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

by Jack London

Buck did not read the newspapers, or he would have known that trouble was brewing, not alone for himself, but for every tide-water dog, strong of muscle and with warm, long hair, from Puget Sound to San Diego. Because men, groping in the Arctic darkness, had found a yellow metal, and because steamship and transportation companies were booming the find, thousands of men were rushing into the Northland. These men wanted dogs, and the dogs they wanted were heavy dogs, with strong muscles by which to toil, and furry coats to protect them from the frost.

Buck lived at a big house in the sun-kissed Santa Clara Valley. Judge Miller's place, it was called. It stood back from the road, half hidden among the trees, through which glimpses could be caught of the wide cool veranda that ran around its four sides. The house was approached by gravelled driveways which wound about through wide-spreading lawns and under the interlacing boughs of tall poplars. At the rear things were on even a more spacious scale than at the front. There were great stables, where a dozen grooms and boys held forth, rows of vine-clad servants' cottages, an endless and orderly array of outhouses, long grape arbors, green pastures, orchards, and berry patches. Then there was the pumping plant for the artesian well, and the big cement tank where Judge Miller's boys took their morning plunge and kept cool in the hot afternoon.

And over this great demesne Buck ruled. Here he was born, and here he had lived

the four years of his life. It was true, there were other dogs, There could not but be other dogs on so vast a place, but they did not count. They came and went, resided in the populous kennels, or lived obscurely in the recesses of the house after the fashion of Toots, the Japanese pug, or Ysabel, the Mexican hairless,—strange creatures that rarely put nose out of doors or set foot to ground. On the other hand, there were the fox terriers, a score of them at least, who yelped fearful promises at Toots and Ysabel looking out of the windows at them and protected by a legion of housemaids armed with brooms and mops.

But Buck was neither house-dog nor kennel-dog. The whole realm was his. He plunged into the swimming tank or went hunting with the Judge's sons; he escorted Mollie and Alice, the Judge's daughters, on long twilight or early morning rambles; on wintry nights he lay at the Judge's feet before the roaring library fire; he carried the Judge's grandsons on his back, or rolled them in the grass, and guarded their footsteps through wild adventures down to the fountain in the stable yard, and even beyond, where the paddocks were, and the berry patches. Among the terriers he stalked imperiously, and Toots and Ysabel he utterly ignored, for he was king,—king over all creeping, crawling, flying things of Judge Miller's place, humans included.

The rest of this story and thousands of other public domain works are available at www.gutenberg.org

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