MENSA WORLD JOURNAL

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Front page: Mensans visiting the EMAG 2017 in Barcelona will be able to visit *The Sagrada Família* (*Basílica i Temple Expiatori de la Sagrada Família*), designed by Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926).

.....

Work on the Roman Catholic Church has been underway for more than 130 years, and according to current projections the building will be finished in 2026 or 2028.

Image: Wikimedia Commons

Correction: In the advertisement for the "Mensa Constellation Competition" (MWJ May 2017), the text cites the Wikipedia article, which states that the constellation is found in the Southern Celestial Hemisphere "between Scorpius and Centaurus". Looking at the star map, a more apt descriptions appears to be that it is found between Octans and Dorado. Many thanks to Ichiro Fujimoto for pointing this out. With appologies./Karin W. Tikkanen

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE <u>SEPTEMBER</u> ISSUE: JULY 1st Dear all,

By the time this issue reaches you, the Mensa International Election of 2017 will be all over, and the new ExComm will be ready take up the reigns of the organisation. At the time of writing, however, the electoral process has just been started, and I hope that as many of you as possible will be casting your votes.

For those who are elected to form the board of the ExComm, there is certainly lots of work ahead, but we must not forget the tremendous amount of work involved in running a National Mensa, of either size. In the last issue (MWJ May 2017) you could read about the new Emerging Mensa, Mensa Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this



issue we follow up with an article on an aspiring Emerging Mensa, namely the group of Mensans in Portugal working hard to establish their own National Mensa. You can read their story on page 8, and on page 9 you can refresh your memory as to what is required to become an Emerging, Provisional, or a Full National Mensa - and also what is required to stay one.

The other main story in the current issue is a profile of Tristan Pang, who received the Mensa International Award 2016. The MERF (Mensa Education and Research Foundation) awards a number of scholarships and prizes each year, and all of the winners of last year were announced in the August issue of the MWJ. Tristan Pang tells us his story on pages 5 to 6, and on page 7 you find a brief summary of the MERF itself.

Lastly (in this editorial column, but probably the first thing you'll read in the journal itself), on page 3 you find Dan Burg's obituary over the late Velma Jeremiah, a leading light within Mensa who served almost 10 years as part of the ExComm. Farewell, Velma, and many thanks for all of your work for Mensa Interntational. You will be dearly missed.

Karin W. Tikkanen Editor of the Mensa World Journal editormwj@mensa.org

Disclaimer: The Mensa World Journal (MWJ) is produced under the auspices of the Mensa International Board of Directors. Mandatory content as identified by the MWJ editor must be published in every national Mensa magazine. Publication of other content is recommended but optional. Opinions expressed in the MWJ are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of any other individual or any official Mensa body.

Submission Guidelines: Language: English only. Text: MS Word (Windows), .rtf, .pdf, Pages, InDesign. Length: 500 words (short) or 1000 words (long). Contributions to be sent by e-mail to the Editor.

The Editor reserves the right to include or edit submissions for space and content considerations. All unoriginal submissions must be accompanied by written permission for publication from the original author. Permission is granted for MWJ articles to be reprinted in any Mensa publication provided that the author, MWJ and MWJ's editor are acknowledged. Permission must be sought from the MWJ editor for reprinting of any part of the MWJ in non-Mensa publications.

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A LEADING LIGHT OF MENSA DIES

Velma Jeremiah has died at the age of 95. Velma was International Chair from 1991 to 1995, International Director - Administration from 1989 to 1991, and International Treasurer from 1984 to 1987. More than that, she was a delightful person, entertaining and charming all. She was also very well-traveled; a native of the United States, she trekked in the Himalayas, went to Antarctica, spent three months exploring Australia on her own, taught English as a second language in Prague, and took the Trans-Siberian Railroad from Moscow to Beijing with a Mensa friend. (The railroad trip occurred when she was 80 years old.) Her wide-ranging interests led her to take up belly dancing and, after retiring from her career as a lawyer, even go into stand-up comedy. And she could laugh at herself – her email address in her later years was "oldvj@...".

Velma will be missed by many, many people throughout the Mensa world.

Mensa is richer for Velma having been a part of it.

Velma Jeremiah was born in July 1921, and passed away on Friday, March 17, 2017 in Edmonds, Washington.



Velma Jeremiah (1921-2017) International Chair 1991-1995 International Director - Administration 1989-1991 International Treasurer 1984-1987

> Obituary by: Dan Burg, American Mensa

Officer Directory

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You can find earlier issues of the MWJ, as well as several national Mensa magazines, at: https://www.mensa.org/publications.



Mensa Canada's 50th and Canada's 150th anniversary

June 2 - 4, 2017 Ottawa Canada

Rugby Weekend

June 16 - 19, 2017

Rugby, Warwickshire, UK

More info: http://www.mensa.org.uk/national-events/west-midlands-rugby-week-end

Annual Gathering of American Mensa

July 4 - 8, 2017

Hollywood, Florida, United States More info: http://ag.us.mensa.org

Mensa Midnight Sun

July 6 - 9, 2017 Lapland, Finland

More info: www.mensa.fi/midnight-

sun2017/Frontpage.html

MY-Camp H

July 21 - 30, 2017 Csopak, Hungary

More info: www.my-camp.org

EMAG 2017: European Mensa Annual Gathering

August 2 - 6, 2017 Barcelona, Spain

More info: https://www.facebook.com/

emag2017/

Mensa at Cambridge

August 10 - 13, 2017 Queen's College, Cambridge, UK

Brabants Weekend in Bergeijk

August 31 - September 2, 2017 Brabants Weekend in Bergeijk, The Netherlands

British Mensa Annual Gathering

September 8 - 11, 2017 Ipswich, United Kingdom

Annual Gathering of Mensa Switzerland

September 15 - 17, 2017 Geneva, Switzerland

IBD Meeting 2017 in Nice, France

October 5 - 8, 2017 2017 Meeting of the International Board of Directors

AMAG 2017 in Australia

October 12 - 15, 2017 Gold Coast, Australia.

More info: www.amg2017.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONSULT THE EVENTS CALENDAR ON
MENSA.ORG

MENSA INTERNATIONAL ON FACEBOOK

Mensa International - a page for interesting things about Mensa, intelligence and giftedness https://www.facebook.com/mensainternational/

ExComm Mensa International - a page where members can learn more about Mensa governance and the activity of elected officers

https://www.facebook.com/ExCommMensaInternational/

The FB group - the official members only group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/MensaInternationalOfficial/



TRISTAN PANG

The winner of the Mensa International Scholarship 2016

When Tristan Pang graduates from university next year, he'll be 16 years old. At an age when most people his age in New Zealand attend senior secondary school, Tristan is taking several mathematics and physics papers a semester, while working at his undergraduate degree at the University of Auckland.

Tristan began self-teaching himself advanced maths at a very early age. There has, he says, always been a huge collection of books in his room at home, and he has always viewed books as a source of entertainment:

"I could read independently when I was two, and by the age of five, I had read all of the books in my room including books by Stephen Hawking, Jim Al-Khalili etc. A little later, I found out that one of the piles of books I had read were the Year 1 to Year 13 science and maths curriculum books. This is how I accidentally started my self-studying journey into the academic world without realizing it."

Tristan's parent spotted his talents very early on, and have done their very best to help him find ways to develop. However, he has always found it a little difficult to connect with people of his own age.

"When I was little, I used to hang around with other kids – we would watch Thomas the Tank Engine, play with Lego, ride our bikes and run around, all things that we all had in common. But deep down, I really wanted them to play my favorite brain and board games with me. I tried to introduce other kids to these games, but no one was interested. They just kept going back to their other toys after a while."

They also enrolled him into different groups of his age, such as **St John Cadets**, but he still found it hard to connect:

"It didn't really bother me too much until we reached the age when we were more conversational,



at about 8 years old. Other kids talked about computer games (such as Club Penguin), their idols (such as One Direction), and books (such as Captain Underpants). I tried to force myself to like these things but I couldn't. It was then I started to realize I couldn't fit in with kids my age."

At the age of 11, Tristan first approached Professor Eamonn O'Brien, the former head of the university's Department of Mathematics, at the University of Auckland, and he also met one of New Zealand's leading scientists, Professor Cather Simpson, who inspired Tristan to try reading research papers. Tristan eventually joined the Science Scholars Programme, and became an undergraduate researcher with Simpson's Photon Factory.

At the end of March this year, Tristan was a panellist at the World Science Festival in Brisbane, talking about his background as a child prodigy, as well as his interest in String Theory. He came across the topic at the age of 13, when he was researching a topic for a science competition:

"I was immediately attracted to it as the theory may be able to unify everything in the universe. This is important as the two most successful theories in physics, the general relativity and quantum theory, contradict each other. After decades of hard work,



scientists found the Theory of Everything/String Theory. By finding the smallest "thing" in the universe, it explains how, what and why all matter is what it is. It can change our understanding of our universe and can solve problems in different areas of physics, as well as global issues. The theory also allows us to predict how, what and where our universe will go. This is strongly related to our future and can ultimately improve our world."

Tristan feels very honoured to have received the Mensa International Scholarship. For him, receiving an international scholarship from a well-established and prestigious organization such as Mensa is beyond "just receiving money", it rather signifies that he is

recognized as having the potential for our world's better future:

"It also serves as a reminder that I have to be philanthropic myself and "give back" whenever I can. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the amazing people at the MERF Board who have considered me to be worthy of this scholarship. It is something that I will cherish throughout my life and would always look upon in those times when I need encouragement!"

Text: Karin W. Tikkanen, Editor of the *Mensa World Journal* Photos: private



DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT TRISTAN PANG?

Tristan's Learning Hub

Tristan's Twitter chat group (co-hosted with a teacher):

https://changeagentsnz.wordpress.com #changeagentsnz Tristan's TEDxYouth @Auckland talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbMKX4J03nY

Tristan's Radio show Youth Voices: http://www.planetaudio.org.nz/youth-voices

MENSA EDUCATION & RESEARCH FOUNDATION (MERF)

Founded in 1971, the Mensa Education & Research Foundation (Merf) is a philanthropic, non-profit organization committed to the pursuit of excellence in human intelligence. The mission and strategic focus are directed at scholarships, education and awards. Each year the Mensa Foundation gives away an average of \$90,000 through a scholarship program run by 400 volunteers from coast to coast; presents national and international awards in recognition of research, education and practical achievement regarding giftedness, intelligence and creativity; and publishes the Mensa Research Journal. The Mensa Foundation also sponsors award-winning educational activities including the podcast series Conversations with Mensa and projects for gifted youth such as the Mensa For Kids website.

Awards

Awards for Excellence in Research
Coppar Black Award for Creative Achievement
Distinguished Teacher Award
Intellectual Benefits to Society Award
Laura Joyner Award
Lifetime Achievement Award
Mensa Foundation Price
Mensa Press Award

For more information, please see http://www.mensafoundation.org.

<u>Scholarships</u>

U.S. Sholarship program (Not limited to Mensa members)

Mensa Member Award Program (Limited to Mensa members)

Ed Vincent international scholarship (For international students enrolled at accredited colleges or universitites in the United States. Limited to Mensa members, except American Mensa.)

Mensa International Scholarship (For international students enrolled at accredited colleges or universitites in a country other than the United States. Limited to Mensa members, except American Mensa.)

Source: http://www.mensafoundation.org:

Mensa Foundation Price - The Thomson Award

The new "Mensa Foundation Prize" was created last year as a result of a bequest by Kenneth Douglas Thomson, a long-time Mensan in American Mensa's San Francisco local group. Mr. Thomson, who passed away a few years ago, provided the details he wished to see in the award's development and implementation. Mr. Thomson provided funding sufficient to provide a substantial prize in his honor that could be awarded every other year in perpetuity. The initial prize, to be awarded this year, is guaranteed to be \$10,000. Subsequent awards will likely be \$20,000 or more.

The Foundation was fortunate in convincing Dr. Harry Ringermacher, Ph.D. (Physics), a former two-time winner of the Foundation's Copper Black Award, that he should chair the new award's judging committee. Dr. Ringermacher has named a judging panel that includes Dr. Ivar Giaever, a Nobel Laureate in Physics, and a Biophysicist.

Since 1971 The Foundation has been blessed by donations from Mensa members, many of whom have graciously provided funding for scholarships and awards. The new Mensa Foundation Prize, funded by a bequest from Kenneth Douglas Thomson, is the latest award. International in scope, this new Foundation award is intended to honor a group or individual for a scientific discovery in the field of intelligence and/or creativity.

Text: Jim Wendell, American Mensa



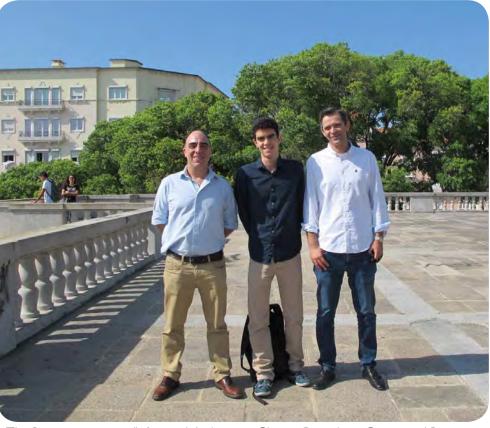
Building a National Mensa Mensa in Portugal

The history of Mensa in Portugal started a long time ago. We have had Portuguese Mensans for decades, but a focused effort to create the emerging chapter of Mensa Portugal began in 2016.

Plans for creating a local chapter of Mensa Portugal have existed for a long time, but what we are doing at the moment stems from a meeting in June 2016, in Lisbon, between a core group of Portuguese Mensans, and the Director of Development, Björn Lilieqvist, and Michael Feenan, the Executive Director of Mensa International. The Portuguese Mensans attending that meeting were organised into a group with the mission of creating the emerging chapter of Mensa Portugal. I was given the task to

manage the overall effort, but this is evidently a team effort. The core group now working towards the goal of establishing a Mensa Portugal includes João Cortes, Rui Chicau Rosado and Pedro Rodriges, among other Mensans who also attended the June meeting, and other Mensans that were not able to attend the meeting but have since then been eager to help.

In February 2017 we started our regular testing effort. We began by having weekly tests, held on Saturdays, in Lisbon, but we have now passed to monthly tests, as the cost/benefit ratio of weekly tests was not very favourable. There had been a few requests for testing sent to the Mensa Facebook page, so we started by picking up on these, but we have now commenced to advertise testing in the open. We have four proctors in Lisbon, working in pairs, and we have another proctor in the north of Portugal, where we are also anxious to conduct texts in order to accommodate the needs of people living in that area. At the



The Portuguese team (left to right): António Chagas Dias, João Cortes and Rui Chicau Rosado.

moment we do not yet have our own psychologist, and for this reason the tests are corrected by MIL.

MIL also remains the central body that administrates the membership of all of the Portuguese Mensans, who become DIMs (Direct International Members) of Mensa International. We are, however, certain that as soon as we reach the number of Mensans needed to become an emergent chapter, the transition of members from MIL to Mensa Portugal will proceed smoothly. Until then, we will go on testing and organising our structure – this currently has the shape of a registered organisation, Associação Mensa Portugal. We are also creating administrative processes, and working on the development of our own website, which will allow us to migrate the administrative functions to an IT platform.

In order to achieve a varied group of people we have decided to target our testing effort especially to college students from various areas, particularly those that would not have a "natural" interest in



Mensa (such as Mathematics, Engineering, etc., where people would have a more expected appeal to eventually join Mensa). The gender ratio is, however, still rather skewed, and less than 10% of Portuguese Mensans are women. This we hope to change within a foreseeable future.

We are planning of having our first General Assembly sometime this year, but this will have to depend on the number of new members we are able to recruit. Our current time plan is to reach emergent status before the 2nd anniversary of the

2016 June meeting.

At the time of writing we have 27 Portuguese Mensans in good standing.

By: António Chagas, DIM (Portugal)

Want to know more? Check out: https://www.facebook.com/MensaPT/



In order to be recognised by ExComm as a **ENM** (*Emerging National Mensa*), a national Mensa must organise monthly social events; have published a newsletter (paper or electronic) at least three times within the past 6 months; have a national constitution approved by members as well as an "Organizing Committee" of at least five members. The aspiring ENM must also have organised an Annual Gathering, and have **more than 50 members in good standing**. The chapter must also communicate their membership database to the MIL Office quarterly, submit an annual report to the IBD once a year, and a copy of their current national constitution, once a year, to both the International Office and the Constitution Review Officer. (Summary of ASIE 06-20.)

In order to be recognised by ExComm as a **PNM** (*Provisional National Mensa*), a national Mensa must continue to fulfil all of the requirement for an ENM, and in addition also have a qualified National psychologist, and test arrangements, approved by the International Supervisory Psychologist (ISP). The chapter must also have an elected Board in place, with the roles/duties of the Board members documented, and an Ombudsman (or equivalent approved arrangement), and hold an Annual Business Meeting. The chapter must have adopted a national constitution approved first by the International Constitution Review Officer (CRO) and then by the members, who must also be provided with a copy of the international Constitution of Mensa. The national chapter must have **more than 100 members in good standing** for 4 consecutive quarters, **or more than 75 members in good standing per million of population**, and must also "demonstrate that it has provided intellectual and social activities at a suitable level in as many parts of the country as practicable". (Summary of ASIE 06-21.)

In order to be recognised by IBD as a **FNM** (*Full National Mensa*), and retain this status, a national Mensa will have to continue to meet all the requirements involved in becoming a PNM (except for the requirement to send a copy of the membership database to the MIL office), and, in addition, have at least 250 dues-paid members or more than 100 dues-paid members per million of population, for 3 consecutive quarters. The FNM must also continue to hold an Annual Business Meeting every year. (Summary of ASIE 06-22.)

N.B. This a summary of the requirements, put together by the Editor of the MWJ, and approved by the Executive Director (MIL). For the complete list of requirements, see the Actions Still In Effect (ASIE), available at: https://www.mensa.org/mil-governance.



Connections

<u>Archaeology.</u> March/April 2017. "Something New for Sutton Hoo."

Sutton Hoo is an Anglo-Saxon ship burial from the seventh century CE. Weapons and jewelry have been excavated there since 1939. But mysterious black lumps were also found. First misidentified as pine tar, these turn out to be bitumen (coal tar) that probably came from Syria. (If you are going to be buried in a ship that will take you to a celestial destination, it would make sense to take along something to patch the hull.) This is more evidence that the ancient world was well-connected globally.

Call Me Frodo.

<u>Smithsonian.com</u>. March 21, 2017. "Mars May Have Had a Ring in the Past and Could Have One in the Future." (Nature Geoscience)

Saturn isn't the only body in the solar system to have rings. Jupiter, Uranus, and Neptune also have them. Mars will become a fifth ring bearer in some millions

of years according to simulations done at UC Berkeley. The Martian moon, Phobos, will stray close enough to its parent be torn apart by Mars' gravity and the debris will make a Saturn-like ring. After the ring forms, it will slowly condense into a new moon about 80% the size of Phobos and the remaining material will slowly rain down on Mars. This has happened up to seven times since the solar system was born, according to the model. Scientists are looking for piles of rubble where the lost 20% of each temporary moon crashed onto the red planet.

Older Than Dirt

Smithsonian.com. March 1, 2017.

"Scientists Think They've Found the Oldest Fossil Ever."

When scientists make claims for having found the 'oldest life on Earth,' there is always skepticism from their peers. But, the claims keep coming. The latest one is from Quebec. Microscopic filamentary forms were found that could be remains of bacteria that once thrived near an ocean vent. The estimated age is between 3.77 and 4.28 billion years, which would mean the living organisms were tough enough to live through the "late bombardment" of Earth by rubble from the birth of the solar system. Of course, every part of the claim is being challenged by other scientists. We will

see how well it survives extended scrutiny.

Heavy Metal

<u>Smithsonian.com</u>. February 3, 2017. "Scientists Now Know Exactly How Lead Got Into Flint's Water."

After switching to a cheaper water source in 2014, the city of Flint, Michigan, found its water contaminated with lead, which is a known neurotoxin. The cause turned out to be a failure to adjust the acidity of the new water supply. Slightly acidic river water acted on 50 years of corrosion in lead supply pipes, releasing enough lead in some cases to discolor the water and cause skin rashes. Lead was so high in some samples that the water qualified as toxic waste. Curing the problem will require replacement of both the lead supply pipes and iron pipes down stream that have been contaminated with leached lead. Flint's problem is a warning for the rest of the nation. Many other water systems may be vulnerable to similar contamination. The cost of correcting the infrastructure will be enormous.



Ummmmm. Coffee

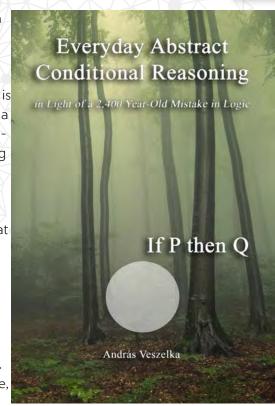
<u>ScienceDaily</u>. March 7, 2017, "Caffeine Boosts Enzyme That Could Protect Against Dementia."

The enzyme, NMNAT2 acts as a "chaperone" to prevent newly made protein molecules from folding the wrong way. It also protects neurons from damage due to stress. Scientists at Illinois University Wanted to help the enzyme work even better, so they screened more than a thousand chemicals and found 24 that were useful. Good old caffeine (found in coffee and tea, of course) and a discontinued antidepressant called rolipram were the best. Others were ziprasidone, cantharidin, wortmannin and retinoic acid.



Andras Veszelka. Everyday Abstract Conditional Reasoning in Light of a 2,400 Year-Old Mistake in Logic. Kecskemet, Hungary: Pellea Human Kutato es Fejlesto Bt., 2014. 175 pp. ISBN-13: 978-9630894630

Very basically, this densely argued tome asserts that classical logicians in antiquity erred in ignoring context in their propositional logic, and that 20th-century logicians erred again in their own way. The problem, according to Veszelka, was and is that context can affect interpretation in unpredictable ways that previous logicians did not take into account. Given the reputation of Mensans as aloof from the herd, his solution is surprising: the interpretations of context by many ordinary people were and are quite right in everyday situations. The correct way to arrive at a really logical conclusion in everyday abstract reasoning, therefore, is the "equivalence/biconditional," which was traditionally categorized as a common fallacy. Veszelka's main assertion is that "everyday reasoning ... is directly relevant when evaluating the correctness of the classical interpretation," and he hopes to make formal logic and everyday reasoning "more compatible with each other". In this respect, Veszelka is acting as a true Mensan, trying to bridge the gap between topics that are too lofty for average people and their practical concerns. Therefore. his work



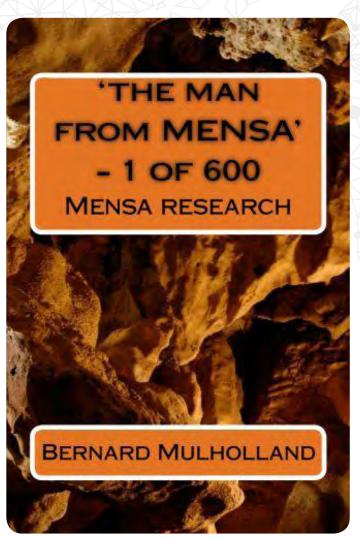
ranks with other books by Mensans that try to make difficult material accessible to ordinary folk who really want to learn.

Jim Emerton. *Pigeon Man: Notes, Tips and Observations from a Lifetime of Pigeon Rearing and Racing.* Cirencester, UK: Mereo Books, 2016. 512 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1-86151-679-4.

Mensans are known for engaging in all manner of unusual professions and hobbies, but even by that standard Emerton is far out. This is the second volume of his on pigeon racing that I have reviewed for MWJ, and it contains much that is applicable to other pursuits. It is partly an autobiography in which Emerton recounts his poor but sturdy British childhood and education, along with his development as a pigeon fancier into a champion. He is also patriotic, asserting that the best fanciers and birds are in the British Isles. Most of the book consists of observations several paragraphs long on various aspects of each chapter's theme, e.g. his pigeon newspaper column, A-Z of pigeon racing, his prize-winning birds, etc. Perhaps the heart of the book is the chapter on the author's "innermost thoughts," in which Emerton discusses his philosophy of life and the universe in relation to his pigeon passion. Many have observed that people who triumph in whatever fields have basic attributes in common, and Emerton illustrates this well. Nonetheless, his volume will really interest other keen pigeon fanciers.



All books reviewed in this column are by Mensan authors, and all reviews are made by Mr Hal Swindall. Send your book for review to **mwjreviews@gmail.com**. You must be a member in good standing; please include your membership number and national Mensa in all correspondence with Hal.



Bernard Mulholland. The Man from Mensa—1 of 600: Volume 1. Mensa Research. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016. 473 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1535307260

As an early member of Mensa, Dr. Mulholland is highly qualified to write this inside history for the organization's 70th anniversary last year. He recounts how Sir Cyril Burt, Dr. Lancelot Ware and Roland Berrill founded Mensa at Oxford in 1946 to recruit the 600 most high-IQ men in Britain to act as special advisors to the government. From this grandiose origin sprang the group we know today, with over 100,000 members in over 100 countries. Despite its wider scope, Mensa's primary mission is still to foster intelligence to benefit humanity (as well as having a ripping good time with other intelligent people). Mulholland is as objective as he can be in examining the personalities of early Mensa, such as Victor Serebriakoff, and the directions it took in the decades after WWII. However, most of the volume consists of Mulholland's musings on Byzantine architecture and archaeology, which are his profession, as well as ramblings on assorted scientific matters; individual Mensans may take these or leave them. The first chapter is worth reading for anyone in this organization, and makes one feel honored to be part of it.

Don't forget ...

the Mensa Photo Competition!

The theme for 2017 is "BORDERS".

Let your imagination run wild!

The international competition: entires must be received by **July 31, 2017**. Entires to be sent to: **photocup2017@gmail.com.**

(For rules, see page 4 of the MWJ April 2017).

Members of National Mensas should contact their national office or board to see if the chapter will hold a national contest.



More information:

https://emag2017.mensa.es