Dear members,

I know your committee has been pretty quiet up until now, but we have been busy, getting on with the various projects discussed at the NAG, among other things.

MENSA SHOP
This was discussed at our meeting in August and it was decided to once again acquire some Mensa branded items for sale. We’ll keep it small for now as we can’t carry too much stock, and we’ll work on designing an efficient ordering system via our website. To this end, we will be ordering a quantity of the Mensa lapel pins, and having some t-shirts for sale as a start. We’d like to hear from you which items you’d like.

T-SHIRT COMPETITION
We have many creative inventive members, so instead of importing - at great cost - someone else’s designs, we thought we’d challenge our members to unleash their inner artist/copywriter and send in designs for t-shirts. Designs may be in any form you like - words, cartoon, pictures, but bear in mind we have to be able to print the shirts for a reasonable fee.

Entries to be submitted: cinzia.mensa@gmail.com
Three winners will be chosen and will each receive a year’s membership, and their t-shirt. The closing date for entries is 30 November 2009.

OUR WEBSITE
Due to circumstances, the brand new website that was mooted previously had to be abandoned and the committee decided to re-vamp the existing one in stages. Work on the first stage has begun: this will enable members to update their own membership details, make secure online payments etc. This should be in place 3 months from now.

The next step will be to host a discussion Forum on the site. We also plan to completely revamp the ‘look’ of the site, something more fresh and inviting. All these proposed changes will take place over time, so it’s still a space to watch. In the meantime, the info on the site will be kept as up-to-date as possible.

ADMIN CLERK
We wish to thank all of those who sent in applications for this post. Yvonne Steyn has been appointed as our admin clerk and took up her duties from September. Admin queries may be sent to mensa@krs.co.za

MENSA SURVEY
We are carrying out a survey to determine what our members get out of South African Mensa. With the information, we will be able to create a better organization for our members, which will in turn improve the overall experience within Mensa SA. Notices will be going out shortly to everyone with all the details.

EASTERN CAPE NEW CHAIRMAN
Etienne Joubert, who started this region, resigned as chair due to work pressures and health reasons. His duties were taken by Deane Lo Ning, an enthusiastic and keen Mensan, whom we met at the AG in August. Deane is keen to continue working towards launching this region. He will be working with Tim Knights who has pledged his considerable talent and knowledge to helping him succeed. Deane hopes to hold a testing session sometime in November.

NEW CHRONICLE
As you see, the new issue of the re-born Chronicle is out. We hope to bring you one quarterly or every 2 months. This depends, of course, on material available for the Chronicle and to this end I urge you all to not be shy about submitting pieces. I know there are many superb writers among our membership! And it needn’t be just prose.

Please have a go and participate in our efforts to make a better Mensa for us all in South Africa.

Your suggestions, comments and input are always appreciated; please feel free to contact any of us.

Cinzia Busi
Chairman, Mensa South Africa
The Dinokeng scenarios

This winter saw the release of the Dinokeng scenarios — a product of debate around what South Africa would probably typify in 2020.

The forum and report was conducted by 35 prominent South Africans, which describe three pathways into the future.

The three scenarios are:

**Walk apart**
The most pessimistic of the three scenarios; distrust of the state and disengagement by civil society. Failed state machinery and politics.

**Walk behind**
the state becomes authoritarian and leads civil society and weakens private enterprise. The party rules rather than governs.

**Walk together**
citizens have matured along with democracy and push the state forward, both being vibrant and dynamic.

The democracy that its likely most people would want.

The report is actually pretty honest, and the largely non-partisan nature of the forum has made it an important document.

This should be of interest to anyone who needs to consider scenarios for South Africa, be it in one’s public or private

Marie Claire feature

Marie Claire magazine did a feature in the October 2009 issue of 3 Mensans – Nicola Peisli, Anna Germanis and Rogeena Kenny.

The article, entitled The Prodigies, examines how the three became Mensans and their experiences of being ‘different’.

The article is a major coup for the marketing of Mensa South Africa. If you have a copy, or can source one without violating any social taboos, do so!

Running with the RAMs in Spain

Each December Mensa Spain holds its annual gathering (RAM). An exceptional opportunity to get to know and enjoy each other’s company.

This year Puerto Banus, Marbella, Málaga has been chosen as the location for the meeting; the entertainment centre of the Costa del Sol.

The RAM offers probably Mensa’s best and most stimulating intellectual and social environment. It represents a golden opportunity to make new friends within a diverse group of Mensans.

The organized activities are optional and diverse, trying to satisfy all preferences. Sightseeing tours are scheduled (Ronda, Gibraltar, Sierra de las Nieves), entertainment activities (hiking, sports, music) and diverse presentations of fellow members. But we shouldn’t forget the stimulating discussions about a coffee or beer, or the never-ending games.

View our website where you can get more details and register before November 30. Space is limited so write to secretaria@mensa.es

Tapping The Delphic process

Local Mensan Garth Zietsman is looking to start a new SIG called the Delphi SIG. It will essentially be a discussion forum that utilises the Delphi technique.

The Delphi technique is a method that structures interactions between experts with the aim of converging on the truth about something.

It involves submitting a number of questions about an issue to a panel of experts (each member independently). The answers are collected and collated by someone and sent to the experts independently again. The answers are kept anonymous and anything irrelevant - like personal attacks - removed.

The experts are now encouraged to revise their answer in the light of the other answers and the process repeated. The belief is that there will be a convergence on the 'truth'. The process is halted after a set number of steps or a convergence.

Summing up across independent diverse viewpoints always produces better results than face to face committees - mainly because it sidesteps the hijacking of experts groups by personalities and more influential individuals. The advantage of the Delphi technique is that it does this while also allowing some debate.

Now Mensans aren’t necessarily experts but they are bright and usually well informed about a wide range of things and I think discussing issues and applying our minds in ways that might actually lead somewhere will be fun, especially since personal animosities, egos and grandstanding that plagues the Mensa Forum will be eliminated. Non-Mensans - especially experts - can be added to the group from time to time.

I believe one topic can be covered every two weeks but the first one or two will serve as experiments. The idea of the SIG is not only to have fun but to make the results known, perhaps alongside the popular opinion on the topic.

Background
The Delphi technique was developed by that US think tank, the Rand Corporation as a way of forecasting future events of national and international importance.

Today’s wider social group has technology which facilitates collaboration and a general world culture of discourse and debate.

At the same time, business and government leaders don’t seem to have the answers we’re looking for. It seems the forum for the oracle is set.


“The belief is that there will be a convergence on the 'truth'.

IBD report

It’s difficult to put into words one’s first experience of Mensa International and the realization of belonging to a truly huge Family from all over the world.

I arrived at the IBD meeting with some considerable trepidation. This wasn’t helped by the absence of my luggage, which was evidently en-

joying tea and crumpets at Heathrow so much it missed the flight.

But meeting everyone at the first evening’s ice-breaker function many, having just arrived, looking as rumpled as I felt, was wonderful. I can’t properly express in mere words the feeling of fellowship, as if I had always known these people.

They’re all instant friends, so willing to share and help with anything.

The three days of meeting were an education and thoroughly enjoyable, certainly entertaining at times, and always efficient. Being completely new, I was allocated a buddy who patiently answered my questions, and

2. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtD0pQCBOJ0
...From page 4

filled me in on background info when needed. I collected so much information about resources available to us, and so many ideas, seeing what other national Mensas got up to.

The whole conference was flawless organized, every detail taken care of. We were in the Hotel Gothia Towers, a lovely hotel with splendid views of a serenely beautiful city.

The small part of Sweden I saw was open, green and full of great people, always friendly, helpful and polite.

After being in meetings all day, we yet had time to see some of the city, sample its cuisine and walk about a bit. At the end of the weekend we were taken on a wonderful tour of the city, by bus and boat - great, and my only, chance to take photographs.

Mensa Sweden certainly hosted a great event with panache and flair and will be a hard act to follow. Next year’s event will take place in Auckland, New Zealand, but the next time the IBD is hosted in the southern hemisphere, we are determined that it will be here in South Africa, where you’ll have a chance to attend an event that everyone should experience at least once.

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The Chronicle

Derek Abdinor       derek.abdinor@gmail.com

The members’ magazine of Mensa South Africa

www.mensa.org.za
First meeting of MIL’s new Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (ExComm) of Mensa International constitutes the four positions elected by the membership worldwide (Chairman, Director of Administration, Director of Development, and Treasurer); the Director of Smaller National Mensas, elected by the International Board of Directors, and the Chairmen of British Mensa and American Mensa.

The new ExComm held its first face-to-face meeting at the end of July in Utrecht, an old city in the centre of The Netherlands. Founded in 47 A.D. as a fortification of an important river crossing, it’s now a comfortable 40-minute train ride from the international airport. The meeting coincided with the second European Mensa Annual gathering (EMAG), and as we shared the same venue, the EMAG attendees had the opportunity to observe the greater part of our meeting. Although we spent most of each day in the meeting room, there was time to meet and chat with the over 300 Mensa members who attended the EMAG.

The ExComm meeting began on Thursday afternoon with a team-building session; while some of the ExComm members have been working together for more than 10 years, others had never met before. Starting with a humorous video on decision making, in which a project manager explains the theory of the decision-making process, we then explored the theory of the life cycle of a team. After the theoretical sessions, we practised what we had just learned. The key element of a team is trust. If you cannot trust each other, you will never be a team. The lessons we learned were firstly to recognize that we all have strengths and weaknesses and secondly that this awareness is fundamental to mutual trust.

Friday and Saturday were both full days of meetings. We'd compiled an extensive agenda, which included topics concerning current licensing contracts, the structure and duties of the MIL office, trademark registration in several countries, governance papers, and other similar issues, to ensure that we all have the same elementary understanding on these essential managerial topics.

We also discussed development, the coming IBD meeting, the new website and the new international publication. Development, which is an area we want to put more energy into, was discussed at length.

On Friday, ExComm, along with a number of representatives of other national Mensas, was invited by Mensa The Netherlands to join them for dinner. Although it was an informal and social dinner, Mensa business is part of the fun even in this setting. The changing of seating after every course contributed to a lively and entertaining dinner; it was both work and fun and very enjoyable.

Late on Saturday afternoon we concluded our official program.

(continued on p02)
A few ExComm members joined the EMAG dance organised for Saturday evening - we have an ExComm that can swing and dance too!

During our three-day meeting, we spent considerable time discussing strategies to raise our International organisation to a higher level; more on this in the next edition of the International Journal. In summary, all agreed that the communication between ExComm and the members worldwide should improve and to this end, we will write regularly in the international publication, publish on the website, and use other means to communicate with the members.

ExComm contributes a great deal to the Mensa organisation and to the members, and we want to raise awareness of what we are doing and why we are doing it. The new website - currently in the testing phase - will be a key factor in the improved communication. This version is, content wise, a copy of the current website, but there are many options built in to provide more and better services to the members. More on this also in the next issue.

We also prepared the upcoming International Board of Directors (IBD) meeting, the meeting of the ExComm and the representatives of all the national Mensas. All national Mensas, via their Chairmen, can put topics on the agenda to be discussed by the entire Board. That meeting will take place from 11th – 13th September.

After these two meetings there will be two long action lists, both for ExComm and the entire Board. Next issue, more details on the ExComm plan and these action lists, and what it will mean for the members worldwide.

Willem Bouwens (Chair)
Sylvia Herbert (Director of Administration)
Bibiana Balanyi (Director of Development)
Deborah Theasby (Treasurer)
Christine Warlies (Director of Smaller National Mensas)
Chris Leek (Chair, British Mensa)
Elissa Rudolph (Chair, American Mensa)

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**eating disorders and intelligence: is there really a connection?**

It infringes upon the realm of the unsaid, le non-dit, to talk about eating disorders and intelligence levels. Polite people just don’t go there in a typical social setting.

Yet, nearly everyone has some concept of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or obesity/compulsive overeating. And again, most will acknowledge that some people just have a certain panache, a certain strangeness coupled with acumen and brains. Why do some individuals develop these characteristics of unhealthy eating patterns? And do these characteristics, these psychological problems, interlink with a certain intelligence quotient?

Unfortunately, though becoming a more permissible topic of discussion, the connection between eating disorders and IQ remains to be truly studied. Anorexia and bulimia, with a particular emphasis on the former, tend to be found in higher socioeconomic-level Western communities. Similarly, people with higher IQs habitually belong to a higher socioeconomic class – if this is due to their obtaining a more lucrative position because of a higher level of intelligence, or if this results from a higher level of intelligence because of birth in a higher socioeconomic stratum will not be broached here.
Conversely, a significant number of obese persons are located in a lower socioeconomic level.

In a study entitled “The Intellectual Functioning of Adolescents with Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa”, carried out by researchers in the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, at Friedrich-Schiller-Universität in Jena, Germany, researchers found a positive correlation between IQ and eating disorders: “The IQ of the eating disordered patients was significantly higher than that of the patients in the comparison group. Patients in the comparison group and bulimic patients, but not the anorexic patients, showed better nonverbal than verbal intellectual performance.”

This relationship between bulimics and higher nonverbal than verbal scores presents itself again in a study by Reuters Health (“Eating Disorders: Anorexia and Bulimia,” March 2002), where it is also stated that “people with eating disorders scored significantly higher than average on IQ tests.”

In 1979, Dally and Gomez “observed that 90% of their adolescent eating disordered patients had an IQ of 130 or more”. Rowland (1970) found that one third of the eating disordered patients in his study had IQs of 120 or more,” according to Maureen Neihart’s 1999 Rooper Review article entitled “The Impact of Giftedness on Psychological Well-Being.” This high IQ of anorexics is again confirmed in a ten-year study in Germany at the Klinik und Poliklinik für Kinder- und Jungendpsychiatrie und Psychotherapie der Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg.

The Prometheus Society asserts as a positive correlate IQ and anorexia, and a negative correlate IQ and obesity/weight-height ratio.

Two Chinese studies substantiate this theory. In a study of 150 obese and 150 normal, healthy children, Zhang and Li at the Department of Hygiene of Children and Adolescents, Nanjing Medical University, Jiangsu, found that the total IQ, the speech IQ, and operation IQ were all “relatively lower” in obese children. At the Department of Child and Adolescent Health, Shandong Medical University, Ji’nan, another Li came to the same conclusion.

Why is this? In the case of anorexics, an already driven personality that pursues perfection, coupled with a high intelligence level and parental/societal expectations, may render one vulnerable to adopt patterns of an eating disorder. “Perfectionism, competitiveness, and high performance expectations from others are characteristics of the gifted that are viewed as possible contributions to the onset of eating disorders,” Neihart contends.

There has been even less research into a possible link between bulimia and obesity. This subject presents fascinating investigative opportunities. If you are a specialist in this area, know someone who is, or would like to delve into it further, please feel free to contact me, and perhaps we can initiate something.

(First published in the IJ, January, 2005)
puzzles...

What do the following have in common? (Answer at bottom of page)

OOODOMOOOO  NOMMAG  OCHPLE

(c)Therese Moodie-Bloom 2009

international calendar

November 6 - 8, 2009 Australian Mensa Conference, at the historic Carrington Hotel in the picturesque Blue Mountains town of Katoomba, 50 km west of Sydney. All members and their guests welcome; enquiries amc2009@mensa.org.au

April 15 - 18, 2010 German Annual Gathering in Dortmund, Germany. Visitors from everywhere are most welcome to explore the “Cultural Capital of Europe in 2010” with us and join in the Mensa activities! Details upcoming in autumn at www.jt2010.de

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The Mensa International Journal (MIJ) is produced under the auspices of the Mensa International Board of Directors. Pages 1–4 of each issue of the MIJ must be published in every national Mensa magazine. Publication of pages 5–8 is recommended but optional. Opinions expressed in the MIJ 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 (Word/Mac), plain text, PageMaker (Windows) Length: 500 word limit. Send by e-mail, fax, snail 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 MIJ articles to be reprinted in any Mensa publication provided that the author, MIJ and MIJ’s editor are acknowledged. Permission must be sought from the MIJ editor for reprinting of any part of the MIJ in non-Mensa publications.

Answer: They’re all games. Dominos (dom-in-o’ s), Backgammon, Pinochle (p-in-ochle)

What do the following have in common? (Answer at bottom of page)
Interest in the relationship between birth order and extraordinary achievement dates back to at least 1874 and Francis Galton’s book, *English Men of Science: Their Nature and Nurture.* As the pioneer of eugenics, Galton chronicled the lives of 180 eminent scientists from various fields, and was able to collect birth order data from 99 of these subjects, revealing that 48 percent of them were first-born sons or only sons.

Countless studies have confirmed Galton’s conclusion, and interest in birth order and eminence continues unabated. The correlation between primogeniture status and eminence is likely limited to certain types of scientific achievement, since later-born children are more inclined to become revolutionary leaders and scientists, and they may be, in fact, far more creative than first borns.

In 1973, Lillian Belmont and Francis Marolla published family size, birth order and intelligence test (Dutch version of the Raven Progressive Matrices) data from nearly the entire population of 19 year-old Dutch men (386,114 subjects). The study revealed that the children from larger families tend to do poorer on intelligence tests and educational measures than their counterparts from smaller families, even when social class is controlled. First borns consistently scored better on the Raven than did later-born children, and with few exceptions, there was a gradient of declining scores with rising birth order, so that first borns scored better than second borns, who, in turn, scored better than third borns, etc. An increase in family size usually indicated a decrease in RPM performance within any particular birth order position. For example, a third born child from a three-child family would have been expected to score higher than a third born child from a four-child family, and a third born child from a five-child family would have been expected to score even lower, and so on.

There have been different approaches with different conclusions since the Belmont-Marolla study, and “Longitudinal studies,” which track individual families over time, reveal that there is no relationship between birth order and IQ. However, the tendency for large families to produce lower IQ children stands firm regardless of the research project. The *Admixture hypothesis* purportedly accounts for the causal link between birth order and IQ. Proponents of this hypothesis argue that other factors, such as parental IQ or socio-economic status, may be responsible for both larger families and low IQ, making it appear in *Cross-sectional studies* as though birth order causes lower IQ. Instead, it is possible that families with lower IQ members tend to have more children. If true, the mean IQ for any given population would gradually decline. To the contrary, however, mean IQ scores are actually rising with each successive generation.

According to Galton’s study, birth order may effect eminence because primogenitures would be more likely to have the financial resources to continue their education, first borns had the advantage of being treated as companions by their parents, implying more undertaking of responsibility than their younger...
siblings, and first born sons would get more attention and better nourishment in families with limited financial resources.

The Resource Dilution Model offers a simple explanation both for higher IQ scores of first born children and for their overrepresentation among the college population of the eminent. It depends upon three assumptions: 1) Parental resources are finite, 2) Additional siblings reduce the share of parental resources received by any one child; 3) Parental resources have an important effect on their children’s educational success.

The Confluence Model was proposed by R.B. Zajonc and Markus (1975) and Zajonc (1976; 2001), and explains the first-born IQ advantage in terms of the ever-changing intellectual environment within the family. It uses a simple formula to compute the relative advantages and disadvantages of various factors such as later-born sibling competition for parental attention, explaining the Belmont-Marolla finding that first borns from smaller families have higher IQs than first borns from larger families. First borns (and older siblings in general) often have to answer questions and explain things to their younger siblings. It is believed this act of tutoring helps the older children to cognitively process information. With rare exceptions, younger siblings do not get the opportunity to tutor their brothers and sisters, effectively explaining why only children usually do not have a higher IQs than first borns.

If first borns do indeed have higher IQs than their siblings, this fact may not be important. Recent studies suggest that intelligence is not the most important factor in the achievement of eminence. Several studies have indicated that personality traits such as consciousness and openness to experience are up to ten times more important than IQ. Additionally, in studies showing a statistically significant advantage for first borns, birth order accounts for only one percent of the variance in IQ. First born IQ advantage is tiny - about one point higher than the second sibling, two points higher than the third, and so on. A minute difference of one or two points on an IQ test is meaningless, since it is within the margin of error, and is highly unlikely to be a significant predictive factor in the pursuit of greatness in any intellectual endeavour.

1 London: Macmillan, 1874.
2 Galton did not count female children when he reported the results, so, theoretically, a boy could be considered the “first born” even if he was the last born, providing that his older siblings were all females.
3 A longitudinal study is a correlational research study that involves repeated observations of the same items over long periods of time, often many decades.
5 Cross-sectional studies (also known as Cross-sectional analysis) form a class of research methods that involve observation of some subset of a population of items at the same time in which groups can be compared at different ages with respect of independent variables, such as IQ and memory. The fundamental difference between cross-sectional and longitudinal studies is that cross-sectional studies take place at a single point in time and that a longitudinal...
Research shows that IQ gains have been mixed for different countries. In general, countries have seen generational increases between 5 and 25 points. The largest gains appear to occur on tests that measure fluid intelligence (Gf) rather than crystallized intelligence (Gc).

The resource dilution model posits that parental resources are finite and that as the number of children in the family increases, the resources accrued by any one child necessarily decline.


As more children enter the family, the general intellectual environment becomes less mature.

Even within science, IQ is only weakly related to achievement among people who are intelligent enough to become scientists. Research has shown, for example, that a scientist who has an IQ of 130 is just as likely to win a Nobel Prize as a scientist whose IQ is 180 (Hudson, L., 1966). Contrary Imagination: A Psychological Study of the English Schoolboy. London: Methuen.

The Old Skin Game


Do you know anyone who steadfastly believes in conspiracy theories? Ever wonder what makes them tick? A team of psychologists in England has put together a profile of people who believe in the alleged 9/11 conspiracy. Such folks practise selective skepticism in that they accept information that supports their ideas while shutting out any contradictory facts. They use their strong belief in one conspiracy as support for a belief in other conspiracies, while rejecting all contrary information. They think they can discover the “truth” and share it with the world. Experts say conspiracy believers suffer from feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem.

Land Bridge


When stone age hunters went after caribou, with primitive weapons, they needed to know where the animals would be. To achieve this, they constructed “drive lanes” to direct the animals into ambushes.

Scientists from University of Michigan think they have found such a drive lane on a submerged ridge 100 feet under Lake Huron between Alpena, Michigan and Ontario, Canada.

The quarter mile long row of big rocks terminates with boulders that could have concealed paleolithic hunters 9,000 years ago, when the Great Lakes were much lower. Underwater exploration of the area will continue this summer using sonar and remotely operated vehicles. The scientists hope to find more evidence of ancient habitation.

Conspiracies


Do you know anyone who steadfastly believes in conspiracy theories? Ever wonder what makes them tick? A team of psychologists in England has put together a profile of people who believe in the alleged 9/11 conspiracy. Such folks practise selective skepticism in that they accept information that supports their ideas while shutting out any contradictory facts. They use their strong belief in one conspiracy as support for a belief in other conspiracies, while rejecting all contrary information. They think they can discover the “truth” and share it with the world. Experts say conspiracy believers suffer from feelings of powerlessness and low self-esteem.

The Old Skin Game


Ten years ago, a 66 million year old mummified hadrosaur thrilled paleontologists. It was so well preserved that they could even see the pattern of scales in its skin. Now, the long dead creature is providing even more information. Scientists think they have found traces of amino acids in its skin along with cell-like structures they identified with an electron microscope. The amino acids could represent the remains of ancient proteins, which could probably not survive intact for millions of years.
from the words... files

Symposium anyone?...

Why I’ve always been fascinated by words is a complete mystery to me, but every time I stumble across a plethora of new (to me, anyway) words, I’m unaccountably thrilled! So you can imagine my delight when a friend - who clearly recognised my predilection - presented me with a whole bevy of additions to my lexicon.

*Bellibone* (a woman excelling in both goodness and beauty),
*biggin* (a silver coffeepot with separate heater which holds the coffee as it’s heated),
*bumblepuppy* (a game played with a tennis ball tied to a post) and
*battology* (the continuous repetition of words or phrases in speech or writing) – just a few of the unusual words in a great little book, Peter Bowler’s *The Superior Person’s Little Book of Words*.

Where else would you find such exotic words for the more commonplace ‘foolish or empty chatter’ (bavardage), ‘to grow dull or stupid’ (hebetate), ‘stretching and yawning’ (pandiculation), or to bruise (suggilate)? And how fabulous to be able to say, in apparent admiration, to the pompous bloke next door as you enter the new mansion he is inordinately proud of, “My goodness, Mr Pemberton-Smythe, your home is perfectly nosopoetic!” How useful for your teenager to be able to say, “Sorry, Mum, can’t do the washing-up tonight; I have to attend a symposium.” (Wish I’d known that one when I needed it!).

And to all our older members, be ready to bristle when someone says enviously, “Heavens, I’m years younger than you but don’t have a complexion nearly as rugose as yours! How do you do it!”

*Nosopoetic*: producing disease, unhygienic, infected; *symposium*: (originally) a post-prandial drinking party with dancers and music; *rugose*: corrugated with wrinkles.

The most unkindest cut of all...

Ever been guilty of repeating yourself unnecessarily? Ever had someone look at you with that raised eyebrow when you’ve talked about SAM missiles and PIN numbers? Well, if it’s good enough for Shakespeare to be pleonastic, you’re in good company! And noone should be raising their eyebrows anyway since some pleonasm have become so much an idiom of the language, that their usage is hardly noticed: *safe haven*, *she wept tears of joy*, and *HIV virus*, for example.

Pleonasm which is the unnecessary repetition - or redundancy - of words, such as *new recruit*, *join together*, *climb up*, *anonymous stranger*, *tuna fish* and *free gift*, is often used - as by the Bard in the most *unkindest cut* - for poetic effect, to reinforce a point or simply to make communication clearer and easier to understand.

However, if you’re like me (and William Strunk Jr, author of *The Elements of Style*, 1918), I’m all for the argument that too much pleonasm is a detraction from meaning and obstructive to communication. As Strunk wrote, *Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.*

Hear, hear, Mr Strunk!