

MENSA WORLD JOURNAL



**A very romantic Mensa wedding...
p7**

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what's in the MWJ this month...



-- on pp2 & 5 are two more of the winning poems in the Mensa International Poetry competition 2021
- Jacek, our international treasurer gives us a financial overview and presents the budget for 2022 on pp3 & 4
- on p6 we announce the runners-up (and their winning photos) in the 2021 International Photocup
- a marriage made in Mensa unfolds on p7
- on p8 we learn about work-life balance, while p9 has the latest research into which types of brain activity support conscious experiences
- Supplementally... is on p10, as usual, and on p12, Therese Moodie-Bloom confounds us again with her original logic puzzles.

Happy reading!

Kate

Industrial Fringes

Ronald L. Johnson of American Mensa was one of two runners-up in the International Mensa Poetry Competition 2021. Congratulations, Ronald!

Ramona speaks of monogamy from her balcony,
while I strain my neck from the sidewalk
to talk above the grind of factory steel.
Sartre and de Beauvoir remained free, I shout,
yet held each other in high esteem.

It doesn't work at all!
Sixty-seven point five percent of married men and women,
will have an extra-marital affair--
the man will have more flings than her.

Ramona plots an escape from her cramped place
to tree-lined Lake Oswego, city of highest per capita income.
I'll just become a Nazi I say.
She nods her head approvingly.

And I think of the posh setup in "The Philadelphia Story,"
Jimmy Stewart imploring Katharine Hepburn to be his girl,
and I'm carrying a drenched Ramona in from the pool.

But here, although the streets are alphabetical,
like any holy city, they begin with Burnside and end with Yeon.
Just as there is no A there is no Z,
no high or low, white noise, carefully monitored pollution,
the yellow invisible smell of recalcitrant burning steel.

Ramona, pert in a blue smock, leaves for swing shift.
She dresses windows in a shop downtown.
I sit on my porch and through the chain link fence
watch my small son gracefully ride his bike
around the vacant factory lot.

It is that fine time when the sky is still light,
and streetlights have come on but illuminate nothing,
are only light themselves.

Ronald L. Johnson

Cover photo taken by Mensan Linda Holmkratz

FROM THE EXCOMM

Jacek Cywinski, MIL Treasurer

Kia ora! It is this time of the year when we should talk about finance. I want to focus on two pieces of information: the approved financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and the approved budget for 2022. To provide you with some background for the 2022 budget, I would like to share with you a brief assessment of 2021 as well.

2020 Financial statements

Income statement for the year ended 31 December 2020 shows a healthy surplus of 255,621 GBP, with revenue sitting at 493,947 GBP and costs at 238,326 GBP. The component income increased by 0.67% in comparison to the previous year. The administrative expenses decreased by 40.93% in comparison to the previous year, mostly due to the cancellation of the IBD meeting in Montenegro. The highest cost was running the Mensa International Office (47%), followed by the name protection (15%) and the website expenses (10%). Additionally, we spent 15,197 GBP (6%) on exploring licensing deals. As of 31 December 2020, Mensa International had 838,265 GBP in bank accounts.

2021 – year in progress

Due to the cancellation of the IBD meeting in Houston, we saved around 120,000 GBP. Additionally, as the planned expenses for Adaptive Testing did not occur, we saved 65,000 GBP

this year. Some other savings were 10,000 GBP on Marketing/PR budget 75th Anniversary, 7,000 GBP on Development travel due to COVID-19, and 5,000 GBP on GLAM. Our revenue for the year is forecast to be 8.5% lower than in 2020.

2022 budget

The budget assumes that the component income will be similar to 2019-2020, which considers the impact of COVID-19. In my opinion, the cautious approach is the best under the circumstances. The 2022 budget assumes a loss due to a variety of factors. Firstly, we assumed safely the turnover (potentially underestimated) and assumed higher costs (especially travel to the IBD in Montenegro). Therefore, the costs are potentially overestimated due to the uncertainty caused by COVID-19 – the cost of international travel might be potentially higher rather than lower. Secondly, we have a number of expensive initiatives such as IT overhaul and adaptive testing. Moreover, we are planning to make an international scholarship contribution to the Mensa Foundation. We are planning to cover the loss from the previous year savings. Therefore, we should go through 2022



pretty smoothly.

Thank you so much for sticking around and helping to grow our organisation in these extraordinary times. Every bit of volunteering means quite a lot, and our financials' data show that you have been actively growing the organisation regardless of the difficult circumstances. Thank you so much for doing that! I am hoping that it will be possible to see you at one of the international events in 2022.

Thank you for reading my update. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Mā te wā.

Jacek treasurer-mil@mensa.org

MIL Budget 2022

MIL budget 2022

	2022		2023
	Details	Totals	
IBD		100 000	110 000
Excomm		24 000	25 000
Development		10 000	10 000
OFFICE		140 000	146 500
Office Salaries	120 000		125 000
Social security	15 000		16 000
Office other costs	5 000		5 500
SERVICES		13 000	11 000
Bookkeeping	4 000		3 000
Accountancy & Audit	9 000		8 000
Website, IT, security & hosting		10 000	26 000
Legal expenses		100 000	85 000
Referendum expenses		8 000	-
OTHER EXPENSES		238 000	81 500
IT overhaul	120 000		-
Mensa Foundation - International Scholarships (2022-2024)	16 000		-
Awards budget	1 000		1 000
DIMs	2 000		-
The First European Mensa Juniors Camp	4 000		-
Mensa International Charitable Foundation - initial funding	10 000		-
IVN	5 000		5 000
GLAM (Conditional) *	5 000		-
Adaptive testing (Conditional) *	65 000		65 000
Supervisor Psychologist Honorarium	2 000		2 000
Archives	3 000		3 500
Publications	500		500
Other fees (including bank and PAYPAL fees)	4 500		4 500
Total cost		643 000	495 000
Revenue			
Component		430 000	440 000
Other income		9 000	11 000
DIM		9 000	10 000
Total revenue		448 000	461 000
Planned Profit (+) / loss (-)		-195 000	-34 000
2021 prognosed difference to the budget		175 800	
Component		7%	7%

*) subject to the approval by the IBD of detailed budget plan

Your Perception of Self Becomes Blurrier Over Time

When you look at two objects close to you such as two leaves, it's easy to tell them apart but when they are farther away from you, they become difficult to distinguish. The two objects become "compressed," a basic principle of perception. One's concept of self works the same way, according to a new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

If someone asks you, for example, if you think you'll be calmer tomorrow than today, it's easy to compare the two. But if you're asked if you think you'll be calmer in 10 versus 11 days, it becomes much more difficult to discriminate between the two days.

"Our self-concept becomes increasingly blurrier over time, the farther you get from the present," says senior-author Meghan Meyer, an assistant professor of psychological and brain sciences. "As you think about yourself farther out in time, either in the past or in the future, you're accessing a less distinguishable version of yourself."

The research was comprised of four studies. In three of the studies, participants either rated their own personality traits or reported on their perception of self at different time points in the past and future.

The study found that relative to their present selves, participants compressed their past and future selves. In the fourth study, participants were prompted with a pair of personality traits and had to select which one described them better at a given period of time while undergoing an fMRI scan.

The brain imaging allowed the researchers to determine how the brain organizes representations of the self across time.

Each time a participant thought about themselves in the present, past, or future, the researchers could get a stamp of what their brains looked like. Those stamps became less distinguishable from one another as participants thought about themselves farther out in time.

"Even at the level of brain activity, we see evidence that our past and future selves become less distinctive as we consider ourselves farther out in time," says Meyer.

The fMRI data was consistent with the results from the participants' personality ratings, providing evidence of what the team calls the "temporal self-compression" effect.

"Our research provides a new way to think about how we organise our identity over time," says first-author Sasha Brietzke.

In psychology, it is widely known that there can be problematic behaviours for some people when they think about their past or future, such as someone who doesn't save enough for retirement because they can't think that far ahead.

Meyer says, "future research on the temporal self-compression effect might help explain this type of behaviour.

People may have difficulty making good decisions for their future self or accurately recalling their past because they can't see their distant self in clear view."

neurosciencenews.com December 13, 2021

There and Back

by Kishore Asthana

When I stroll in the by-lanes of my brain

I often see lightning sans clouds or rain

On ancient park benches old ideas chat

Of how things were, of this and that

A bit away, young ones play

Yet to mature, waiting for their day

Here and there, new ideas arise

Sometimes slowly, often a surprise

I find a temple where no one prays

No idols or incense, just serene days

Through an arch I see "All That Is"

Wondrous calm, lasting bliss

But those who enter, return no more

And I stand wondering, no longer sure

I look back at the life that I'll leave

Memories in doorways, things I believe

I hesitate a moment, then turn from the Divine

Giving up "All" for what I love as "mine"

I walk past the benches - old ideas grin

As I trudge back knowing - I lose, they win.

Kishore Asthana's (Mensa India) poem was one of the top six in the Mensa International Poetry Competition 2021

mensa international photocup 2021

Last month in the *Mensa World Journal* it was announced that **John Page**, (*right*) of British Mensa, had won the 2021 Mensa International Photographic competition. Sadly, John never got to know about his success as he died before the result was announced.



John did, however, find out about winning the British Mensa section of the competition before he passed away in September last year.

On hearing the news of his overall International Mensa win, John's widow Rosemary said John would have been delighted.

She said: "I've been thinking back to the day the photo was taken. We were bobbing about in a small boat trying to keep out of the way of the fishermen on *Inle Lake* in Myanmar. He was using my shoulder to steady the camera, which wasn't very comfortable. After what seemed ages and several attempts he suddenly shouted 'got it' in my ear. On reflection I think the result was worth some discomfort!

"I don't think he envisaged entering any competition or even winning at the time. I'm pleased the photo went on to win the International competition, but just so sad that John never knew."

Congratulations to the two runners-up, Franck Citalal (France) for his entry *Pas de Cote*, and Jim Shane (USA) for his entry *Balance for Life*.



Pas de Cote

Balance for Life



MEMBER PROFILE

by Susan Jensen

Lena Wilderang (nee Padukova) of Swedish Mensa lives an action-packed life that could have been lifted from one of her husband Lars Wilderang's' best-selling novels.

Lena was born 38 years ago in Moscow with an adventurous spirit and keen mind. At age 3, she learned to read upside down by watching from across the table as her grandmother taught her older sister to read. From a very young age, she began exploring the world, setting out on ambitious adventures, luckily always intercepted and brought home by her parents.

Without much effort, Lena was consistently the best student in class and enjoyed extra instruction in art and music. Her grandfather got her hooked on chess and she also became an adept skier. Her lack of patience kept her from advancing to the higher levels of chess and piano but she managed to stay focussed on art, and to this day illustrates books and has art exhibits in Sweden.

Around age 11, Lena was placed in a school with a tougher syllabus and thrived. She strongly supports the idea of placing gifted students in classes with others of similar ability.

In the mid-1990s Lena's science researcher parents jumped at the opportunity to work in Sweden. It was hard for thirteen-year-old Lena



to adapt to a new culture but ultimately the freedom and egalitarianism of Swedish society gave her the space to expand herself in many directions. She continued attending Russian school remotely.

The combination of credits from the Russian and Swedish schools meant she was able to enter the University of Gothenburg and she became an IT professional, becoming CEO of an IT consultancy company.

Lena was always active in high level athletics and "extreme adventures." At age 33 she left IT to start her own extreme adventure company, *Adrenalena*. She now gets paid to do what she most loves - taking people along with her ocean sailing, mountaineering and on trips to Rus-

sia where she is both guide and interpreter. Lena also lectures and coaches people on fulfilling their potential.

In 2007, Lena took the test to join Mensa. She had just moved to Malmo and was grateful for the chance to socialise at local Mensa pub meetups. She got hooked on the stimulating, welcoming atmosphere at Mensa gatherings and has been involved in many aspects of her local Mensa group, including organising national and international events. Mensa friends introduced her to her husband Lars. Lena introduced Lars

to sailing and mountaineering. On the top of the highest free-standing mountain in the world, Lena asked Lars to marry her - and he said "Yes!" They got married in the 17th century fortress of the Caristen - wearing period costumes (see front cover).

During the pandemic, Lena became an on-call fireman and returned to doing some IT work. She thrives on having many balls in the air, and extending herself physically, mentally and spiritually. Lena believes it's everyone's responsibility to live life to the fullest and says her motto is, "If you're not afraid of your dreams, you're not dreaming big enough!"

SJ

Work-life balance?

Finding the right work-life balance is by no means a new issue in our society. But the tension between the two has been heightened by the pandemic, with workers increasingly dwelling over the nature of their work, its meaning and purpose, and how these affect their quality of life.

It's easy to believe that if only we didn't need to work, or we could work far fewer hours, we'd be happier, living a life of hedonic experiences in all their healthy and unhealthy forms. But this fails to explain why some retirees pick up freelance jobs and some lottery winners go straight back to work.

Striking the perfect work-life balance, if there is such a thing, isn't necessarily about tinkering with when, where and how we work – it's a question of why we work. And that means understanding sources of happiness that might not be so obvious to us, but which have crept into view over the course of the pandemic.

Attempts to find a better work-life balance are well merited. Work is consistently and positively related to our wellbeing and constitutes a large part of our identity. Ask yourself who you are, and very soon you'll resort to describing what you do for work.

Our jobs can provide us with a sense of competence, which contributes to wellbeing. Researchers have demonstrated not only that labour leads to validation but that, when these feelings are threatened, we're particularly

drawn to activities that require effort – often some form of work – because these demonstrate our ability to shape our environment, confirming our identities as competent individuals.

Work even seems to make us happier in circumstances when we'd rather opt for leisure. This was demonstrated by a series of clever experiments in which participants had the option to be idle (waiting in a room for 15 minutes for an experiment to start) or to be busy (walking for 15 minutes to another venue to participate in an experiment). Very few participants chose to be busy, unless they were forced to make the walk, or given a reason to (being told there was chocolate at the other venue).

Yet the researchers found that those who'd spent 15 minutes walking ended up significantly happier than those who'd spent 15 minutes waiting – no matter whether they'd had a choice or a chocolate or neither. In other words, busyness contributes to happiness even when you think you'd prefer to be idle. Animals seem to get this instinctively: in experiments, most would rather work for food than get it for free.

The idea that work, or putting effort into tasks, contributes to our general wellbeing is closely related to the psychological concept of *eudaimonic* happiness. This is the sort of happiness that we derive from optimal functioning and realising our potential. Research has shown that work and ef-

fort is central to eudaimonic happiness, explaining that satisfaction and pride you feel on completing a gruelling task.

On the other side of the work-life balance stands *hedonic* happiness, which is defined as the presence of positive feelings such as cheerfulness and the relative scarcity of negative feelings such as sadness or anger. We know that hedonic happiness offers empirical mental and physical health benefits, and that leisure is a great way to pursue hedonic happiness.

But even in the realm of leisure, our unconscious orientation towards busyness lurks in the background. A recent study has suggested that there really is such a thing as too much free time – and that our subjective wellbeing actually begins to drop if we have more than five hours of it in a day. Whiling away effortless days on the beach doesn't seem to be the key to long-term happiness.

This might explain why some people prefer to expend significant effort during their leisure time. Researchers have likened this to compiling an experiential CV, sampling unique but potentially unpleasant or even painful experiences – at the extremes, this might be spending a night in an ice hotel, or joining an endurance desert race. People who take part in these forms of "leisure" typically talk about fulfilling personal goals, making progress and accumulating accomplishments – all features of eudaimonic happiness, not the hedonism we associate with leisure.

(continued on p11)

Which Types of Brain Activity Support Conscious Experiences?

Consciousness remains one of the brain's biggest mysteries. We know very little about how it emerges from activity within the brain, but most neuroscientists agree consciousness is dynamic in nature.

Our subjective experience doesn't appear to us like a sequence of disjointed snapshots. Instead, we feel the world as a continuous stream of information. This information is integrated, since we don't perceive a different stream per sensory modality — one for vision, one for hearing, and so forth — but as a single one where all percepts merge.

In *Chaos*, from AIP Publishing, researchers explore the question: which characteristics should brain activity have to support this type of conscious experiences?

"We conclude that brain activity should be integrated, with multiple regions 'talking to each other' frequently," said Enzo Tagliazucchi, a co-author from Universidad Adolfo Ibañez and the Latin American Brain Health Institute in Santiago, Chile.

"At the same time, the regions involved should change continuously, accounting for the multiplicity of contents that appear in our conscious experience."

The group searched for integrated structures that encompass most of the brain but change configuration from time to time. Their hypothesis

was these structures should vanish during states of deep unconsciousness, such as deep sleep or while under general anaesthetics.

"In the case of the brain, nodes are specific anatomical regions and links indicate brain activity measured at those regions is significantly synchronised," said Tagliazucchi.

"At a given time, we have a network describing how brain regions are synchronised, and this network changes in time as brainwide communication patterns also change."

The group wanted to zero in on groups of nodes tightly coupled together (modules) that maintain their identity over time, yet the involved nodes change as time progresses.

"We hypothesise that the largest of these modules is important for consciousness, since it is both dynamic and integrates a large proportion of brain regions," Tagliazucchi said.

To put it to the test, they developed a way to detect these structures within temporal networks by using current algorithms within certain parameters. The researchers built artificial time-evolving networks to test and benchmark these algorithms and find the optimal parameters.

They applied algorithms using



these parameters to brain imaging data and confirmed several hypotheses. Brain activity during conscious wakefulness presents large integrated and dynamic network modules. These modules tend to vanish or fragment during sleep or under general anaesthesia. These changes are similar between both conditions, suggesting unconsciousness occurs in both situations following the same mechanism.

"We expect our methodological advances will help other scientists detect integrated structures within other temporal networks by means of hypothesis-driven parameter optimization," said Tagliazucchi. "Concerning the neurobiological significance of our findings, I would like to see our results replicated in other unconscious brain states and different modal organisms and be validated using metrics that do not come from

(continued on p11)

supplementally...

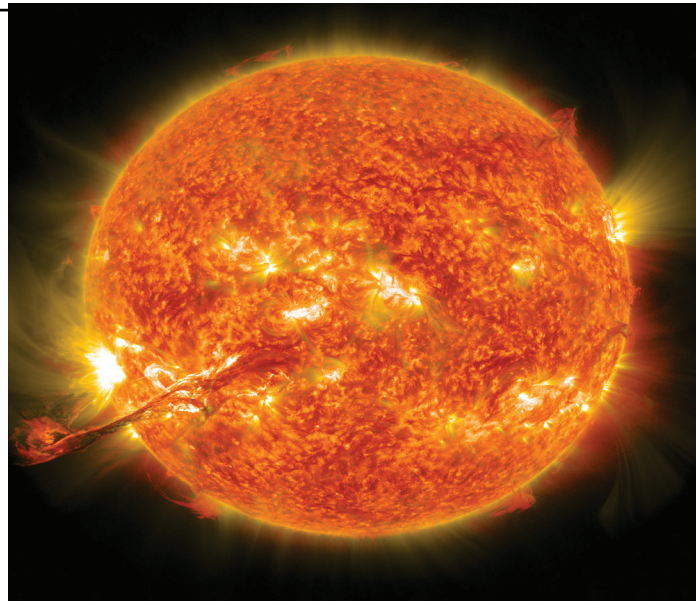
by John Blinke

Sunny

You hear about solar flares. And you hear about coronal mass ejections (CMEs). They are not the same thing. You could think of a solar flare as the pulse of light from an arc welder and a CME as the smoke: the arc light hits you immediately, and the smoke takes a while to go anywhere. On the sun, X-ray flares happen when magnetic field lines break. The clouds of plasma released by this action are the CMEs. They balloon away from the sun at anything from 250 kilometres per second (km/s) to as fast as 3000 km/s, but always much slower than the speed of light. Solar telescopes see flares eight minutes after they erupt, because that is the length of time it takes light to travel from the sun. But CMEs can take days. This is a good thing, because it gives us time to prepare.

When solar astronomers see a flare in progress, they can often see a CME take off in some direction as a huge blob. If the CME looks like a full halo around the sun, they know it is coming right at us. Then, when the plasma passes the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DS-COVR) satellite hanging out at the L1 Lagrange point between sun and Earth, it can tell utilities that they have about fifteen minutes to shut equipment down to prevent electrical damage.

I have been flipping channels on the NOAA geosynchronous weather satellite site ([https://www.](https://www.star.nesdis.noaa.gov/goes/sector.php?sat=G16§or=cgl)



Graphic:
from NASA
on Unsplash.com

[star.nesdis.noaa.gov/goes/sector.php?sat=G16§or=cgl](https://www.star.nesdis.noaa.gov/goes/sector.php?sat=G16§or=cgl)). Two satellites are of particular interest to me: GOES east and GOES west — covering the coasts of the United States. There are image channels for water vapour at high, medium, and low altitudes; dust; visible red or blue light; infrared; ozone; CO₂; and more. I do not know how professional weather forecasters use this information. But it is mesmerising to watch it evolve in front of me. Each channel shows some atmospheric feature against a line map of the country. Together with local radar, they can tell me whether I can do some yard work on the weekend, or if I should just stay inside. Weather features often look similar in shape, though different in extent. But water vapour looks different at each altitude. If you check this out, start with the animation called “GeoColor” and crank up the “Loop” to the max, which is 240. You will see a day and night animation of clouds passing

over a colour map of the US, with city lights at night.

Grazin’ in the Grass

Eureka! News Release November 25, 2021. “Loss Of Ancient Grazers Triggered A Global Rise In Fires.” (Science) According to Yale University, the advent of massive wildfires coincides with the extinction of large grazing animals like giant bison and woolly mammoths between 50,000 and 6,000 years ago. Looking at charcoal recovered from lake sediments at 410 sites around the world, researchers found that places with more extinctions also had more fires. Apparently, plant stuff that was not eaten by megafauna became tinder. The Americas suffered most. Africa and Australia suffered the least.

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(continued from p10)

Zap

ScienceDaily, November 11, 2021. "Simple Silicon Coating Solves Long-Standing Optical Challenge." (Nature Communications)
One problem with super powerful, ultra short light pulses is that each frequency of light travels at a different speed through transparent materials. So blue light arrives at a target somewhat later than red light, smearing out the pulse. Scientists at the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) have come up with an engineered coating that gets around this problem. Applied with regular lithography tools, it preferentially delays red light so the pulse can stay together. **JB**

(continued from p9)

neuroimaging, such as behavioural observations."

<https://neurosciencenews.com/21/09/21>

(continued from p8)

This orientation sits well with a new concept in the field of wellbeing studies: that a rich and diverse **experiential** happiness is the third component of a "good life", in addition to hedonic and eudaimonic happiness.

Across nine countries and tens of thousands of participants, researchers recently found that most people (over 50% in each country) would still prefer a happy life typified by hedonic happiness.

But around a quarter prefer a meaningful life embodied by eudaimonic happiness, and a small but nevertheless significant number of people (about 10-15% in each country) choose to pursue a rich and diverse experiential life.

Given these different approaches to life, perhaps the key to long-lasting wellbeing is to consider which lifestyle suits you best: hedonic, eudaimonic or experiential. Rather than pitching work against life, the real balance to strike post-pandemic is between these three sources of happiness.

<https://theconversation.com>

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THERESE'S TEASERS

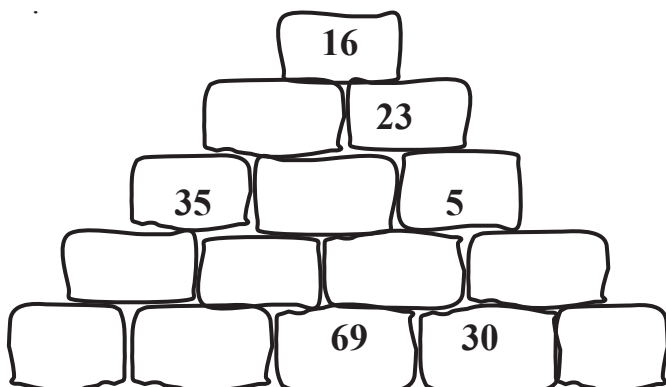
Cryptosum

Each symbol represents a different digit from 1 to 9. The sum of the digits in each row and column is shown. Find the sum of the numbers along the diagonal line starting from the top left-hand corner.

♁	◆	◆	⚡	23
□	☯	●	♁	17
∞	◆	⚡	□	30
☯	●	⊗	∞	15
21	14	21	29	?

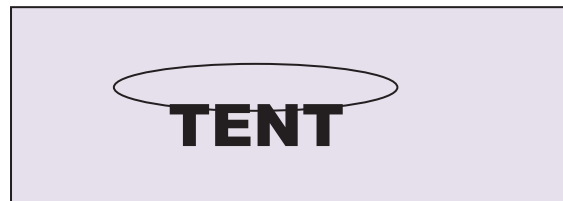
Cairn

The number on each stone represents the difference between the numbers in the two stones on which it sits. There is a two-digit number in each of the bottom stones, using the digits 0-9 once each.



Rebus

An emotional state (or a season!):



Music Mates

Every Thursday students from a local Music School perform one item at the local Old Folks' Home. During the year each student performs a solo, plays a duet with each other student, and accompanies a guest singer. The organizer found that if two duets were dropped, the performances would spread evenly over the fifty-two weeks.

How many students were there?

Riddle

*My first is in COPY but not in MIMIC
My second's in HOSPITAL but not in CLINIC
My third is in PAIN but never in ACHE
My fourth is in SUPER but not in MISTAKE
My fifth is in MISERY and also in MEASURE
My whole is a substance that's said to give pleasure.*

What am I?

Answers

Cryptosum: 23 (5 + 1 + 9 + 8)

Cairn: 12 58 69 30 74

Rebus: Discontent

Music Mates: Nine. (9 solos, 9 accompaniments and 34 duets = 52 performances)

Riddle: Opium

© Therese Moodie-Bloom

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