



**MENSA**  
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# **MENSA WORLD JOURNAL**



*Mensa's shining stars in the CyberTaipan National Finals Competition p5*

## WHAT'S IN THE MWJ THIS MONTH...

- 'Mensa' and 'Politics' don't usually go hand in hand, but Mark Dettinger from the Executive Committee fills us in on the IBD's discussion on the topic at their 2020 meeting. Also, 15,000 members voted on the recent Referendum - a very impressive number of votes! (p3)

- Scientists delve into some unusual research at times; see what firstly makes us laugh and then consequently makes us think, on p2.

- Two more short-listed poems from last year's competition are on p4, while our cover story of the Australian Mensa team's success in the 2020 CyberTaipan competition is covered by Dr Ronald YU, Australian Mensa's Gifted Children's Coordinator on p5.

- On p6, Anke Breuer, a German Mensa member writes about her honorary art project (texts/photos) dealing with Multiple Sclerosis, and on p7, our member profile this month is of Henrik Neubauer, a Mensa Slovenia member, the quintessential renaissance man: physician, ballet dancer, choreographer, opera director as well as avid cyclist and skier.

- If you're forgetful, you may be a genius! Check out the latest research on p8.

- When you count sheep at bedtime, can you actually visualise the sheep? If you can't, you may have a rare condition called aphantasia, which prevents you from easily recreating images in your mind's eye. (p9)

- John Blinke's Supplementally is on p10, while Therese's Teasers are back again on p12.

Kate Nacard, Editor

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MWJ at [www.mensa.org](http://www.mensa.org)

## Research that makes us laugh... and then makes us think!

**Reading a research paper is not the first thing that comes to mind when we desperately need a laugh. But once in a while, we see scientific achievements that crack us up at first, and then make us think. Despite 2020 being a year of discontent, some scientists never lost their sense of humour. Here's some of the 2020's somewhat unusual research work that was worthy of getting published.**

### **Own a diabetic dog? You are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes.**

More than 400 million people around the world have Type 2 diabetes. Naturally, thousands of scientists carry out research about this killer. A team of eight researchers from Sweden understood that there was a knowledge gap because "no study has investigated the shared diabetes risk in dog and cat owners and their pets". To address this, the Swedish team analysed veterinary care insurance data from 208,980 owner-dog pairs and 123,566 owner-cat pairs. The conclusion? Owning a dog with diabetes was associated with 38% increased risk of Type 2 diabetes for the owner, while owning a cat with diabetes had no such association.

One can argue that this is a spurious correlation that arose from a bad case of data-dredging. However, the conclusion rightly points out that dogs and owners share health habits which can affect each other's risk of acquiring diabetes. Getting an active pet dog would keep the

owner active, resulting in lowered risk of diabetes. This research found its place in the coveted British Medical Journal.

As for cats – we don't take cats for walks do we?

### **Wanted – Salesperson. Essential requirements: A manly beard.**

Most scientists wear specs. Most sailors sport beards. A tall, slim, well-dressed person is usually wealthy. At least that's what the movies and TV have made us believe. What do others feel about a well-groomed beard? That's exactly what a team of researchers from St. Edward's University attempted to understand. The researchers carried out five studies to test the power of the beard and all of them converged on one simple conclusion. Ethnicity, age, dress or colour of skin didn't matter. A well-kept beard always trounced clean-shaven faces or just a moustache, hands down.

It all boiled down to one simple fact. Customers viewed bearded sales personnel as having greater expertise and trustworthiness when it came to the product or the service which they promoted. The effect of the beard spanned industries and dimensions and applied equally to in-person and online sales.

### **Professors discover talk is cheap!**

In what can be termed as Captain Obvious's finding of the year, two professors from Purdue University discovered that people tend to talk

(continued on p8)

# FROM THE EXCOMM...

Mark Dettinger

## From the Director of the Smaller National Mensas

### Mensa (and) Politics

I am writing this column during the first week of 2021. The result of the 2020 constitutional amendment referendum arrived a month ago. The referendum, which asked to limit to two the number of terms an International Elected Officer may serve in the same international office, passed with a clear majority of 79.6%. Voter turnout topped 15,000 votes.

In my opinion, this is a good outcome for two reasons. Firstly, I believe that such a term limit is a good thing in general. New people bring fresh ideas to the table, so after two terms in the same office, even if these terms were not consecutive, ExComm members should step aside and let someone else have a go.

And secondly, the turnout was impressive in itself. 15,000 votes may seem still low, considering that we have almost 150,000 members, but the trend looks good. In the last two international elections, only 6,300 and 7,500 votes were cast, so it seems that our members are becoming more interested in Mensa politics.

This brings me to my next point: Politics. As Björn Liljeqvist wrote in the December issue, the International Board of Directors (IBD) had a long discussion in the 2020 IBD meeting about “Mensa, Politics, and Opinions”, which is still going on online.

Several National Mensas would welcome international guidelines

on what exactly constitutes a “political action”, which according to the constitution Mensa is not allowed to take. They would also appreciate guidelines on how to communicate on difficult topics and rules for ‘edge’ cases on which our constitution is silent or ambiguous. Furthermore, there is a contradiction in our constitution between Mensa’s claim to not have any opinions as an organization and the many implicit opinions that Mensa has nevertheless. For example, we certainly believe as an organization that Mensa’s objectives, which are listed in article one of the constitution, are good and worth pursuing. Personally, I would like to see this contradiction resolved by a rewording of the constitution along the lines of:

*Mensa’s goals are ... (list of objectives). The National Mensas are encouraged to advance these goals. Mensa shall have no aim besides those mentioned in article 1. On any topic that is not covered by the Mensa constitution, Mensa as an organization shall not express an opinion as being that of Mensa.*

This, of course, is just a draft. The details will have to be discussed, and of course another referendum would be required to actually amend



the constitution in such a way. In my opinion, such a change would make it easier to pursue the goals listed in article 1, as taking actions (which might be perceived as political) and expressing opinions on the goals would be allowed. At the same time, any request of the kind that “Mensa should do something about X”, where X is not an objective listed in article 1, could still be easily rejected by referring to article 2.

Floreat Mensa,  
Mark Dettinger

**Send your news and articles of interest to the Mensa World Journal!**

**[mwjeditor@mensa.org](mailto:mwjeditor@mensa.org)**

## PREDICTING MUSIC-INDUCED EMOTIONS

Researchers at the University of Turku have discovered what type of neural mechanisms are the basis for emotional responses to music. Altogether 102 research subjects listened to music that evokes emotions while their brain function was scanned with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

The researchers used a machine learning algorithm to map which brain regions are activated when the different music-induced emotions are separated from each other.

“Based on the activation of the auditory and motor cortex, we were able to accurately predict whether the research subject was listening to happy or sad music. The auditory cortex processes the acoustic elements of music, such as rhythm and melody. Activation of the motor cortex, then again, may be related to the fact that music inspires feelings of movement in the listeners even when they are listening to music while holding still in an MRI machine,” says Postdoctoral Researcher Vesa Putkinen.

The researchers also discovered which brain regions are activated when the research participants watched videos that evoke strong emotions, and tested whether the same regions were activated when the participants were listening to music that evokes emotions.

The results suggest that the emotions evoked by films and music are partially based on the operation of different mechanisms



in the brain.

Films, for instance, activate the deeper parts of the brain that regulate emotions in real-life situations. Listening to music did not strongly activate these regions nor did their activation separate the music-induced emotions from each other. This may be due to the fact that films can more realistically copy the real-life events that evoke emotions and thus activate the innate emotion mechanisms. As for the music-induced emotions, they are based on the acoustic characteristics of music and coloured by cultural influences and personal history.

Traditionally, music-induced emotions have been studied through classical instrumental music.

“We wanted to use only instrumental music in this study as well, so that lyrics did not impact the emotions of the research subjects. However, we included film music and songs by the guitar virtuoso Yngwie J. Malmsteen,” notes Putkinen.

*Neurosciencenews.com, December 28, 2020*

### *the wind...*

*The wind is my mistress,  
she stirs my soul,  
lights up my senses,  
and fills my eyes with life.  
She whispers songs of nature into my ears,  
the orchestra of birds to bring me cheer.  
I feel like a butterfly on Angel's wings,  
soft and ethereal of the joy it brings,  
like a gossamer thread floating by,  
such beauty to my eagle eye.  
If this be paradise then I am blessed,  
a lovely feeling the very best.*

**Jim Emerton**

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### **HABIT**

*With the sun in the skies,  
To look in your eyes  
And speak of your manner so stately,  
Seemed such a task,  
Much simpler to ask  
“Have you read any good books lately?”  
And when evening descended  
And the day's ennui ended,  
I began to admire you greatly,  
But what end would it serve  
To do more than observe  
“Have you read any good books lately?”  
At night in the park  
And you in the dark  
I tried to stop acting sedately.  
I knew that would pay,  
And yet could but say  
“Have you read any good books lately?”*

**Gilbert Seltzer**

## Mensa’s shining stars in the CyberTaipan National Finals Competition

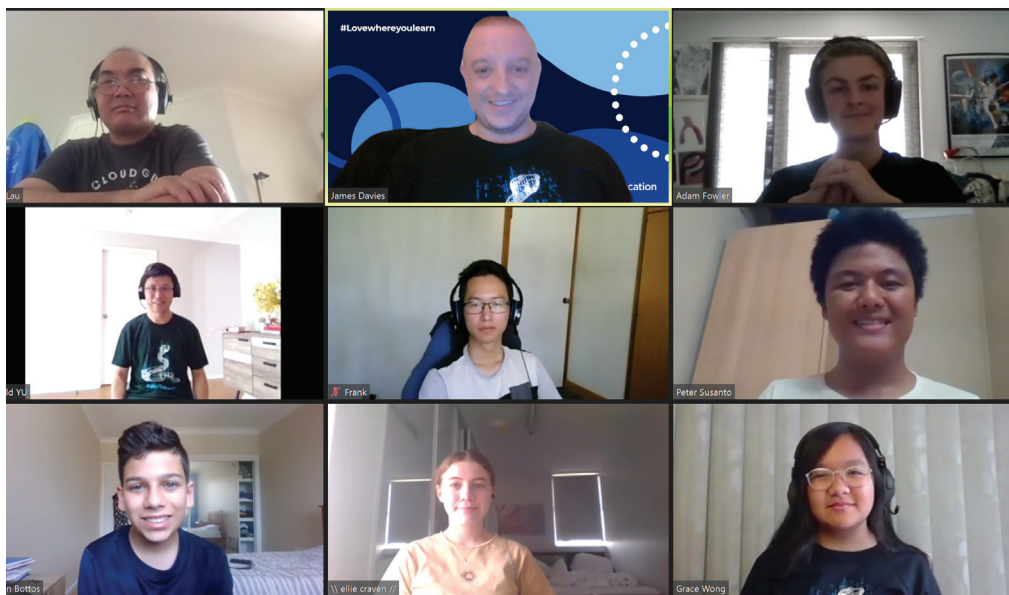
The Australian Mensa team has won 2nd place in the CyberTaipan National Finals, outperforming 112 teams in the national cyber security competition organised by AustCyber.

The achievement was made possible by a close and efficient collaboration among five amazing members: Elenor Craven, Adam Fowler, and Ayden Bottos from Sydney, Peter Susanto from Darwin, and Grace Wong from Perth.

In the first two rounds of the competition, Team Mensa received the highest scores by successfully identifying cyber security vulnerabilities in virtual images of the Linux, Windows, and Windows Server operating systems. All five team members worked collaboratively and operated as an effective team to protect the critical systems.

In the National Finals, Team Mensa had encountered a technical issue where they failed to gain access to the Window images. The team responded in a positive manner and swiftly changed their coping strategies. This amazing attitude and resilience won them second place in the competition.

The prize for winners is an opportunity to join the Work Experience Program of CSIRO, Australia’s National Science Agency, and being mentored by leading scientists and researchers in bioinformatics, astrophysics, machine-learning, and nanotechnology.



Mentors Sam Lau from Brisbane (top left), James Davies from Sydney (top middle), Frank Wu from Adelaide (middle), and head coach Ronald Yu from Canberra (middle left). Our team members Adam Fowler (top right), Peter Susanto (middle right), Ayden Bottos (bottom left), Elenor Craven (bottom middle), and Grace Wong (bottom right).

### Recruiting the Next Mensa Team

Mensa Australia is recruiting participants for the next CyberTaipan competitions in 2021. If you are interested in participating in the CyberTaipan or have any suggestions, please contact Dr Ronald YU, the Australian Mensa National Gifted Children Coordinator, at gcc@mensa.org.au.

CyberTaipan is part of the global Youth Cyber Defence Challenge Network. We want to recommend Mensa in US, UK, and Canada to participate in the corresponding CyberPatriot, CyberCenturion, and CyberTitan competitions. Our ‘half-baked’ thought is to form a cross-country platform in which we can share our teaching resources and training materials with Mensa members in different countries.

### About CyberTaipan

As cyber security becomes a critical priority for countries across the world, we’ll need a pipeline of cyber security professionals up for the challenges of the future.

Modelled on the US Air Force Association’s CyberPatriot Program, the CyberTaipan competition is part of the Global Youth Cyber Defence Challenge Network. This network has been running for 11 years. In Australia, 114 teams of high school students aged 12-18 were recruited to compete in several rounds of competitions in 2020.

Students were coached by professionals in cyber security and IT sectors.

**Dr Ronald YU**  
National Gifted Children Coordinator  
Australian Mensa

## Change of Track – The 1000

Anke Breuer

*“Change of Track - changing track, One step forward, one step back, Half a step forward again, losing synchronicity, Veer out of line, tread a bumpy path, Life plan A becomes life plan C. “*

**People who are affected by the diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis are familiar with the expression “Changing Track”. We would like to introduce people with MS who manage their changing track every day. ([www.spurwechsel-ms.de](http://www.spurwechsel-ms.de))**

My name is Anke. I am a German Mensa member and happy to have the chance to write about my honorary art project (texts/photos) dealing with multiple sclerosis today. Happy and multiple sclerosis? That doesn't fit? Well, actually, I look quite happy, right?

Let me start at the beginning. I decided finally to announce my illness officially. I had lied for nearly ten years because I lost jobs and/or friends whenever I said that I “suffer from” Multiple sclerosis. Now, being also a Mensa member, I can even say I am two MS in one person!

In 2016 Markus, a good friend and a photographer, and I, text-writer, started a photo-text-project for the German Multiple Sclerosis Society (DMSG). The first results were in the form of several large photo collages with accompanying text panels which showed people affected by MS. These were presented during the North Rhine-Westphalia Opening performance at the World-

MS-DAY in May 2016 in the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum, Cologne.

Since then we have met, photographed, interviewed and given real faces to the “1,000 Faces of MS” in the form of real faces, stories, and people just like you and me.

Later that year, we won a highly-paid award for social engagement and were also nominated by the German government for a second social award in 2018 (we didn't win that one but we still “won” because our project gained more recognition).

Our prize allowed us to also interview people in other countries. We first travelled to Bulgaria as that was the country I lived and worked in (that sequence!) when I was diagnosed. I brought my MS back, I always say. Later on, we also went to Austria for further interviews.

I still cannot believe how successful our project has become! People feel appreciated and valued - and that has always been and still is our main aim! Currently our exhibition



is shown in a rehabilitation centre in Bonn, Germany, and we are looking forward to many other good places to show the real faces of MS! Our exhibition can also be requested at the DMSG and loaned out for free. For more information: [www.spurwechsel-ms.de](http://www.spurwechsel-ms.de) (German and English).

And, of course, you can always get in touch with me personally!

**Anke Breuer**  
[anke.breuer@gmx.de](mailto:anke.breuer@gmx.de)

## MEMBER PROFILE by Susan Jensen

**Dr Henrik Neubauer, a Mensa Slovenia member, is the quintessential renaissance man: physician, ballet dancer, choreographer, opera director as well as avid cyclist and skier.**

Born in 1929 in a small town in Slovenia, Henrik moved to his grandparents' home in the larger city of Ljubljana at age 10, so that he could attend better schools. Across the street from his grandparents was a theatre; throughout Slovenia there was a strong interest in culture and Henrik found himself drawn to theatre, ballet and opera. He began ballet lessons at age 15 and then, after WWII, attended an opera ballet school in addition to his regular high school studies. At age 17 Henrik began dancing in the ballet ensemble of Ljubljana Opera, becoming a soloist by age 24.



Henrik contemplated a career in diplomacy but didn't want to join the Communist party, which would have been required. Waffling over what to do after high school, he

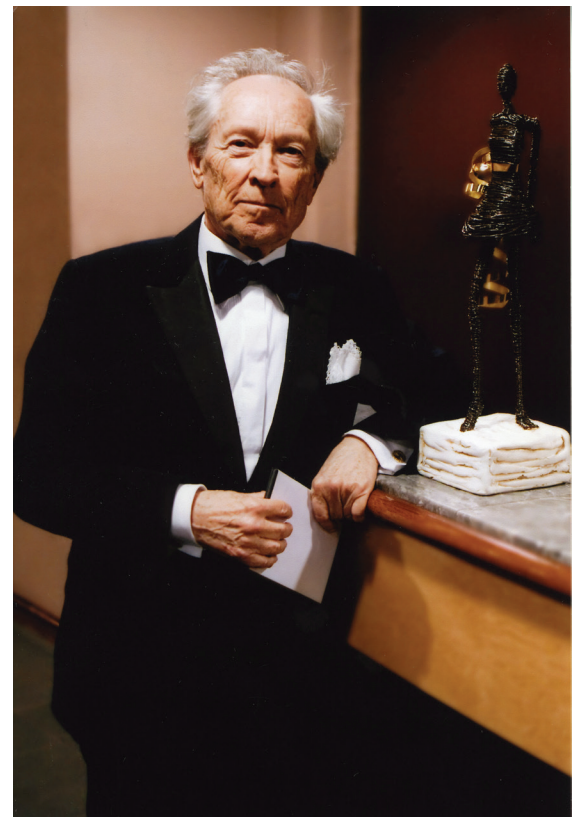
missed the deadlines to apply to all universities, except medical school. Given his father, grandfather and both siblings were doctors, he decided to give medicine a try.

While studying medicine Henrik continued performing and studying ballet, finishing both courses of study the same year, 1953. He worked from 1957 to 1961 as a general practitioner with a special interest in public health. For a year, from 1960-61, he juggled medicine and his new job of Director and Chief Choreographer of the Ljubljana Ballet but then retired from medicine, retaining his medical licence. To this day, he offers unofficial medical help to family and friends.

Henrik met his wife Jasna 48

years ago, while swimming in the Bohinj Lake. Together they have one son and he has two sons from his first wife, who died. Two sons live in Slovenia while the third one is working

at the European Union in Brussels and is also involved in Mensa. In 1989, Dr Neubauer and his 12-year-old son had their IQs tested, out of idle curiosity. They both scored



very highly and were invited to join the Yugoslavia Mensa group. Nowadays, Slovenia has their own Mensa group.

Dr Neubauer has always enjoyed travelling and meeting people. Being part of Mensa has enabled him to expand that experience by meeting interesting Mensans all over the world.

At age 91, Henrik is still active in cycling, swimming, skiing, and directing operas and other events. When COVID-19 is over, he plans to travel again. His advice on how to lead a happy life? Forget all sad memories. Live in the moment with eagerness and an open heart. Instead of saying goodbye, say, "See you again!"

**Susan Jensen**

# Are you forgetful? You just might be a genius!

by Inham Hassen



**The forgetful intellectual is a stock character in popular fiction. Emmett Brown from *Back to the Future* series, Professor Calculus from *Tin Tin*, Isaac Kleiner from the *Half Life Saga* and Albus Dumbledore in the *Harry Potter Series* are famous forgetful intellectuals from fiction.**

On the other hand, Sir Isaac Newton is famously known for holding an egg and boiling his watch for breakfast. Reportedly, Adam Smith was once giving a tour of a Glasgow tannery and absent-mindedly fell right into the tannery pit. Legend says that Albert Einstein once forgot his home address on his way from Princeton University.

So is this true? Is the gift of intellect packaged with forgetfulness? A recent study led by Professor Oliver Baumann of Bond University sheds new light on the way the body's

most complex organ retains memories. The interesting argument the research team put forth, was the fact that an individual always associates a person with a specific environment. A doctor is always associated with a hospital. A teacher with the school. This is how the brain encodes memories.

When the same person is encountered in a different setting, the brain has to reprogram itself to dissociate the person and the environment. Imagine seeing your teacher in a nightclub. It takes some time to recognize her. The reason is due to the way the human brain functions. It takes a few moments for the brain to reprogram itself for dissociating the person and the environment.

In the study, students lying in an MRI brain scanner were asked to memorize multiple images of objects (such as a backpack, clock or cupcake) against backgrounds (including a gym, laundromat and garden). Half of the objects had been shown to the students a day earlier. This made it possible to look at differences in brain responses when objects were familiar or had been encountered only once. In the subsequent testing stage, researchers swapped the backgrounds of some objects and found this led to difficulty in remembering the unfamiliar objects. The forgetfulness was accompanied by changes in activity in the hippocampus, one of the core human memory areas.

Dr. Baumann's argument for this behaviour of the brain is simple yet valuable. The human brain creates efficiency through association of memories with each other. This way, encoding unnecessary information is avoided by the brain. The downside is it can lead to forgetfulness because it takes time to recognize memories out of context. This leads to the conclusion that highly efficient brains are inevitably forgetful. No wonder geniuses are absent-minded. They just use their brains for more important things!

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*(continued from p2)*

more about healthy behaviour than practise it themselves. In fact, many would actually preach to others about eating and drinking in moderation, doing regular exercise and controlling the wallet, while doing the exact opposite themselves.

The researchers carried out a survey among large groups of participants about their health-related behaviours during a holiday season. Thereafter, they compared the responses to understand how they rate themselves against the average American. In many cases, over 60% of the respondents recorded what's known as Social Desirability Bias (SDB), the overwhelming desire to fit in to the society through talk rather than action, proving the old adage – talk is cheap.

**Inham Hassen**



## Can't Draw a Mental Picture?

**If you were asked to draw a picture of your grandparents' living room from memory, could you do it? For most people, certain details are easy to visualize: "There's a piano in the corner, a palm by the window and two seashells on the coffee table."**

But for others, such a task would be almost impossible. These individuals have a rare condition called aphantasia, which prevents them from easily recreating images in their mind's eye - in fact, the phrase "mind's eye" may be meaningless to them.

"Some individuals with aphantasia have reported that they don't understand what it means to 'count sheep' before going to bed," said Wilma Bainbridge, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Chicago who recently led a study of the condition, which can be congenital or acquired through trauma. "They thought it was merely an expression, and had never realized until adulthood that other people could actually visualize sheep without seeing them."

Bainbridge, who is an expert on the neuroscience of perception and memory, decided to experimentally quantify the differences between aphantasic individuals and those with typical imagery on a specific set of visual memory tasks. For the study, published in the journal *Cortex*, Bainbridge and colleagues showed photographs of three rooms

to dozens of individuals with both typical and limited imagery. They then asked the participants in both groups to draw the rooms, once from memory and once while looking at the photo as a reference.

The differences in the memory experiment were striking: Individuals with typical imagery usually drew the most salient objects in the room with a moderate amount of detail, like colour and key design elements (a green carpet, rather than a rectangle).

Individuals with aphantasia had a harder time - they could place a few objects in the room, but their drawings were often simpler, and relied at times on written descriptions. For example, some wrote the word "window" inside an outline of a window rather than drawing the windowpanes.

While people with aphantasia lack visual imagery, they appear to have intact spatial memory, which is distinct from imagery and may be stored differently, according to Bainbridge. People who are congenitally blind, for example, can still describe the layout of a familiar room.

And surprisingly, even though people with aphantasia remembered fewer objects overall, they also made fewer mistakes: they didn't create any false memories of objects that hadn't been in any of the rooms, and placed objects in the correct location - but the wrong room - only three times.

"One possible explanation could

be that because aphantasics have trouble with this task, they rely on other strategies such as verbal-coding of the space," Bainbridge said. "Their verbal representations and other compensatory strategies might actually make them better at avoiding false memories."

By contrast, people with typical imagery made fourteen mistakes overall, and regularly included objects that hadn't been in the photographs. Bainbridge said this could be because they were drawing on their visual memories of other living rooms - something people with aphantasia couldn't have done.

Both groups drew more objects, made no mistakes and scored equally well when they were asked to simply copy the photographs, suggesting that the difference is real and specific to memory, not artistic ability or effort.

Recognition is also not affected: people with aphantasia knew which pictures of rooms they had already seen when shown them a second time, and also recognized family and friends - though they cannot visualize their faces without seeing them.

Aphantasia has only come to light recently as a psychological phenomenon. Bainbridge said that's due in part to famous people—including Ed Catmull, a co-founder of Pixar, and Blake Ross, a co-founder of Firefox—stepping forward and writing about their lack of experience with visual imagery, thereby calling attention to

*(continued on p11)*

# supplementally...

by john blinke

## Virtual Archaeology

Smithsonian, December 17, 2020. "Researchers Reveal Mummy's Surprising Contents Without Unwrapping It." (Journal of the Royal Society Interface.) Contributed by Stephen Darnell.

The bad thing about mummies is that you usually have to unwrap them to find out anything about them. But researchers from Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine examined an intact mummy from Hawara a different way. They used computed tomography (CT) scanning combined with x-ray diffraction. That let them make a 3-D image of the mummy's soft tissue and they were also able to tell what materials were used to make artifacts inside. High resolution CT requires a bright x-ray source, so they used the Advanced Photon Source (APS) at Argonne National Laboratory. In addition to some great imaging, they got a small surprise: the adult-sized coffin contained a five year old child.

*Graphic by Robert Thiemann on Unsplash*

## Radio Worlds

ScienceDaily, December 16, 2020. "Astronomers Detect Possible Radio Emission From Exoplanet." (Astronomy & Astrophysics)

Scientists at Cornell University knew that our giant planet, Jupiter, broadcasts radio noise. So they looked for those kinds of signals in planetary systems within about 100



light years. The only candidate that showed similar emission was in the Tau Boötes system. It is a marginal observation, so they are eager for other astronomers to confirm it. They would like to get multiple observatories involved to cooperate with the Low Frequency Array (LOFAR) in the Netherlands that they used to make the observation.

## Head Games

Independent, December 15, 2020. "New Part of Aztec 'Tower of Skulls' Discovered by Archaeologists in Mexico."

If an Aztec priest wanted to mess

with your head in the 16th century, he would cut it off and add it to the Tzompantli (skull rack). After a while, someone would plaster your head into one of the seven massive skull towers around the city of Tenochtitlan. Mexican archaeologists have found another 119 skulls that were part of one of the towers, now buried under Mexico City. (Horried Spaniards did not destroy them completely.) The skull count is 603 so far. We do not know who the victims were. They were not all enemy soldiers

because some of the skulls belonged to women and children. For Science Magazine video of the skull racks, search Youtube for: "Feeding The Gods: Hundreds Of Skulls Reveal Massive Scale Of Human Sacrifice In Aztec Capital."

## Migraine

New Scientist, December 12, 2020. "People Experiencing a Migraine Climbed Inside an MRI to Find Out Why."

Scientists at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich Germany study migraine headaches. They recruited 50 migraine suffering volunteers and

instructed them to call when a migraine began. Then they immediately put them in an MRI machine for a brain scan. The scientists continued scanning the patient periodically until a new migraine began, which might be one to three weeks later. Using this procedure, the researchers found that migraine attacks were associated with a loss of communication between the brain's hypothalamus and the limbic system. The headaches subsided when these two systems were able to communicate again. The hypothalamus acts like a scheduling agent while the limbic system relates to feelings.

“COVID-19 Virus Enters the Brain, Research Strongly Suggests.” (Nature Neuroscience)

A disquieting fact about the COVID-19 Virus is that the spike proteins on its coat can cross the blood-brain barrier. Even without the whole virus, they can cause brain fog and body fatigue because they incite inflammation. Because those surface proteins can cross the blood-brain barrier, the whole virus can probably get in, too. So, when victims have trouble breathing, it might be partly due to the virus messing with brain centres.

the condition.

Since aphantasia affects only a small percentage of the population, Bainbridge and her coauthors recruited participants from online forums where people with the condition have shared their experiences to ensure a large sample size of 61 aphantasic individuals and 52 controls with typical imagery. The drawings of both groups were scored objectively by almost 2,800 online volunteers.

Bainbridge said the study adds to a growing body of research that validates aphantasia as an experience and demonstrates key differences between object and spatial memory.

<https://neurosciencenews.com/aphantasia-spatial-memory-17488/>

**COVID Brain**

ScienceDaily, December 17, 2020.

**John Blinks**

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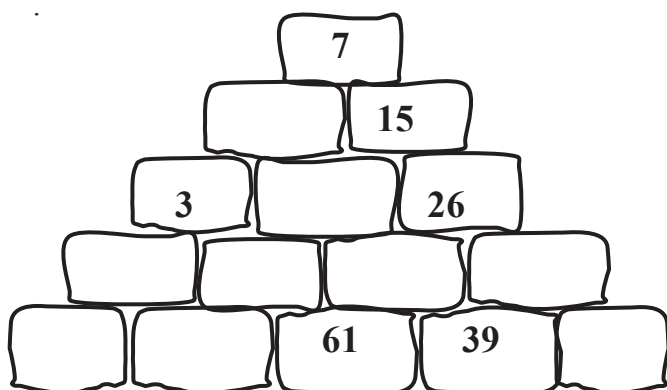
## Cryptosum

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 from the top left-hand corner.

				14
				24
				23
				24
22	30	10	23	?

## 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

Decipher the rebus to what Jared's project is on:

a **REN RUB**

## Cryptic creatures

Six school crossword teams were asked to adopt creatures as mascots but all six were cryptic about their choices.

Team 1: Heavy metal swimmer

Team 2: Winter garment adds one

Team 3: Short moments leave love

Team 4: Three clockrunners have mocktail starter with ice

Team 5: Cad's partner could be a marsupial

Team 6: Clobber for fish?

## Anagram Riddle

6 letters have I, you can change them around  
To make words which vary by more than a  
sound:

- *The best of its kind, costs more than mere pence;*
- *Pretends to make move to trick foe's defence.*
- *Insects do this, when they "over-abound"*

Now that you've solved me, what words have you found?

## Answers

**Cryptosum:** 17 (1 + 8 + 2 + 6) **Cairn:** 42 50 61 39 87

**Rebus:** a back-burner **Cryptic Creatures** Team 1:

Goldfish 2: Coati 3: Mosquito 4: Mice 5: Kangaroo

(boulder) 6: Leatherjacket **Anagram Riddle:** Finest Feints Infest

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