

NOESIS

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IN THIS HASTILY SLAPPED-TOGETHER (AND THEN RE-SLAPPED-TOGETHER) ISSUE:

BYLAWS OF THE MEGA SOCIETY

NEWS FROM TIMES SQUARE, BY CHRIS LANGAN

EDITOR'S COMMENTS ABOUT A VOTE

WHAT HAPPENED WITH THIS ISSUE

Yesterday, November 19, I was assembling the September and October issues and called Paul Maxim to ask his permission to include most of the material he's sent me during our long correspondence concerning his high-IQ credentials. If we're going to vote on his credentials, as Chris Cole suggests, I thought it would be fair for members to know his credentials, which include a couple Mega-level scores on tests taken long ago. Maxim gave me permission to run the material, and I put two dozen pages of correspondence into this issue. I then dropped the Sept. and Oct. issues off at Chris Cole's office. Tonight, I found an 11-page article from Chris Langan in the mail. I was going to make it the Nov. issue and consider myself caught up. A few minutes ago, Maxim called and asked me to pull all material pertaining to him, saying that we're moving too fast, that the call for a vote is high-handed, and that he wants time to gather his thoughts and compose a response. So I'm having Chris Cole pull the Maxim pages and am running Chris Langan's article instead.

BYLAWS OF
THE MEGA SOCIETY

ARTICLE I - NAME OF ORGANIZATION

1. This organization shall be known formally as The Mega Society.
2. The names "Mega" or "Society" may also be used within these bylaws, within publications of The Mega Society, and within formal and informal communications between members.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The Mega Society shall pursue the following purposes:

1. To promote members' projects, both in the fields of the arts and the sciences, that require high intellectual performance.
2. To conduct research and to assist in research relating to high intelligence and intelligence testing.
3. To provide a forum for an exchange of ideas between members.
4. To foster intellectual freedom, understanding and friendship between members.
5. To provide identity and support for members who desire association with their peers.

ARTICLE III - OFFICIAL ADDRESS AND AGENT

1. The worldwide official address of the Society shall be the same as that of the administrator of the Society.
2. For legal purposes, the agent-general of The Mega Society shall be the administrator of The Mega Society.
3. In the event that the office of administrator is vacant, the official address and agent of the Society shall follow the succession outlined in ARTICLE VI (OFFICERS).

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERS

IVa QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. All members of The Mega Society as of April 15, 1984 are presumed to have satisfied the membership qualifications.
2. Given that the present status of I.Q. testing in the higher ranges is somewhat amorphous, the membership-at-large of the Society shall vote during the annual meeting to set admission qualifications subject to rule 3 through rule 7 in this section.
3. The entry requirement may be satisfied by a qualifying score on one approved test. →

4. The entry requirement may be satisfied by a qualifying score derived from properly applying the Fergusson Formula to two or more approved tests.
5. At no time shall the qualifying score be set higher than 4.76 σ sigma above the mean.
6. At no time shall the qualifying score be set lower than 4.25 σ sigma above the mean.
7. A majority of all votes cast is required to set or alter the admission standard within these guidelines.

**IVb APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP
AND THEIR APPROVAL**

1. Prospective members shall submit a request for membership, including proof of qualification, to the membership officer.
2. The membership officer shall forward an opinion on the proof along with a copy of the request and proof to all officers of the Society.
3. Each officer shall vote regarding admitting the applicant and shall send the vote, along with the copy of the request and proof, to the membership officer.
4. In the event of a tie vote, the membership officer shall, after considering the recommendations of the other officers, cast an additional vote to break the tie.
5. A majority vote in favor of admitting the applicant shall result in an invitation to the applicant to join the Society.
6. The membership officer shall notify applicants of the acceptance or rejection of their applications and invite qualified applicants to join the Society.
7. Applicants who are invited to join the Society may do so by remitting the proper membership fee to the recording secretary-treasurer and by remitting a signature card to the editor, both to be completed within 45 days of the date of their invitation to join the Society.
8. Any member who administers a test authored by that member to any person, applicant or member shall be entitled to charge and retain a reasonable testing fee.

IVc MEMBERSHIP FEES

1. The new member one year membership fee shall be 150% of the annual renewal fee. →

2. The annual renewal fee shall be US\$12.00 based on the value of the US Dollar as of January 1, 1984 for North American members and US\$20.00 on the same basis for other members. The difference in fees is stipulated only because of the difference in mailing costs between North America and other areas.
3. The new member fee and the annual renewal fee are to be remitted to the recording secretary-treasurer. Remittance must be in US Dollars or a money order for US Dollars or a check drawn on a US bank for US dollars.
4. The recording secretary-treasurer may waive all or part of the annual fee for members who make a written claim of indigence.

IVd RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

The rights of the membership as a whole, or the members as individuals, shall include:

1. the right to select the officers of the Society and to recall any or all of the officers,
2. the right to amend the bylaws according to the terms of the bylaws,
3. the right to receive the services and benefits of the Society,
4. the right to be protected against personal derogation, violation of privacy or intimidation,
5. the right to participate in leadership processes according to the terms of the bylaws,
6. the right to present proposals and suggestions, and to advocate their acceptance by the Society,
7. the right to due process in the functioning of the Society,
8. the right to obtain information concerning the actions of the officers, the operations of the Society and the finances of the Society,
9. the right to retain full control over any use made of test scores and dues waivers except that such information may be used in statistical summary form so long as such use does not allow identification of the member.

Member's rights may not be abrogated, nor shall they be lost even if not fully exercised; nor may these rights be surrendered or bargained away, nor may anyone be permitted to violate these rights. The Society shall act promptly and diligently to protect and maintain these rights.

IVe EVIDENCES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership officer shall provide each new member with a letter of acceptance and welcome into the Society, a copy of the current bylaws, and a copy of the most recently published membership list. →

2. Members are entitled to receive the periodical newsletter of The Mega Society.

IVf REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Members shall pay all required fees by due dates as set by the recording secretary/treasurer.
2. Members shall notify the recording secretary-treasurer of any change in address.
3. Members shall allow their names and addresses to be published in Society publications.
4. Members agree to abide by the bylaws of The Mega Society.
5. Members shall file a signature card with the editor.

IVg CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

There shall be only one class of membership.

IVh RESIGNATIONS OF MEMBERS

1. Any member may resign for any reason by sending a signed and dated notice of resignation to the membership officer.
2. The membership officer shall mark the membership records in his possession to show the date of resignation and delete the member from future membership lists. The membership officer shall notify all other officers of the resignation so that they may mark their records appropriately.
3. Any member who executes rule 1. of this section (IVh) and subsequently requests membership status may be required, by majority vote of the officers, to follow rule 1., section IVb prior to being readmitted.

IVj TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members may be expelled from the Society for one or more of the following reasons:

1. failure to pay annual dues,
2. proof of fraud in obtaining admission to the Society,
3. any conduct tending to bring the society into severe disrepute.

Members liable to expulsion have the right to present a written defense to the membership officer within 45 days from the date of mailing of notice by the membership officer that the member is liable to be expelled. The officers shall then vote on the expulsion. If the majority of all current officers vote for expulsion, the member shall be notified that a defense of four pages or less may be presented in the next issue of the newsletter and the member may request a vote by the membership on the future status of that member in →

the Society. If the member requests a membership vote the ballots shall be mailed along with the newsletter following that in which the member's request for a vote appears. A two-thirds majority of all votes cast by the members shall result in expulsion of the member and he shall be so notified by the membership officer.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Va PLACE

As the membership of The Mega Society spans the earth and as the requirements of membership do not include the ability to travel, the official meeting place for the conduct of business of The Mega Society shall be within the printed pages of the periodic newsletter of the Society.

Vb DATE OF ANNUAL MEETING

An annual meeting to conduct routine business of the Society shall occur in the pages of the newsletter during the first three issues of the newsletter in each calendar year. The meeting opens with the first mailing of the newsletter during the calendar year and closes after voting is completed on all issues or at the mailing of the third newsletter in the calendar year — Whichever is later.

Vc SPECIAL MEETINGS

1. A special meeting period may be announced in the newsletter when it becomes apparent to the officers of the Society that a significant policy decision must be made which is not covered in the bylaws. If a decision is required immediately, the administrator may make the decision but then is required to report the decision to the membership in the next edition of the newsletter for ratification by the membership.
2. A petition signed by three members or 10% of the membership, whichever is greater, when delivered to the editor, is also sufficient to open a special meeting in the pages of the newsletter.
3. All special meetings are open with the first notice of such meeting in the newsletter and are closed after the matter has been settled by vote or by stipulation.

Vd DEFINITION OF A QUORUM

A quorum sufficient to conduct business shall be equal to the total number of votes cast so long as prior notice of the impending vote is published in the newsletter, ballots are mailed to all members, and newsletters are sent to all members.

Ve VOTING PROCEDURES

1. All voting shall be by mail ballot.

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2. Ballots shall be mailed by the editor to each member along with the third newsletter to discuss any issue or election except in cases where the bylaws specify other procedures.
3. Marked ballots shall be sealed into an unmarked envelope which shall be placed into another envelope and mailed to reach the editor within 30 days of the mailing date of the ballots to the members. The outer envelopes shall bear the member's signature.
4. The editor shall retain the outer envelopes bearing the voter's signature and forward the inner unmarked envelopes to the recording secretary-treasurer at the end of the 30 day voting period. Outer envelopes which do not show the signature of a member will result in the inner envelope being marked "invalid" by the editor. These shall also be forwarded to the recording secretary-treasurer but will remain unopened. They will be used only to make an accurate count of the total and type of votes cast. If a member sends more than one vote within the allowed voting period, only the ballot contained in the latest postmarked envelope shall be forwarded to the recording secretary-treasurer.
5. The recording secretary-treasurer shall tabulate the votes and make a written report to the editor within 15 days from the end of the 30 day voting period.
6. The editor shall publish the voting report in the next published newsletter. Any action dictated by the voting shall take effect on the day the results are published unless some other effective date is specified in the ballot.
7. Blank or indecipherable ballots are not valid. Ballots mailed in outer envelopes not containing a proper signature are not valid.
8. A majority of the valid votes cast shall be sufficient to decide issues and elections except in cases where other voting rules are specified in the bylaws.
9. Proxy votes are not allowed.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

1. The following officers shall be elected during the annual meeting of each even numbered calendar year by majority vote for each office: administrator, editor, membership officer, recording secretary-treasurer, and international secretary.
2. In the event there is no majority vote in an election where there are more than two candidates for the office, there shall be a second ballot to decide between the top two vote getters from the first ballot.
3. In the event there is a tie between the top two vote getters in an election where there are more than two candidates for the office, there shall be a second ballot to decide between the top two vote getters from the first ballot.

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4. In the event of a tie between the only two candidates for any office, the remainder of the newly elected officers shall break the tie by majority vote of those officers. If a tie remains, an additional vote shall be cast by the newly elected officer who fills the position first listed in Article IV, rule 1, and who is not involved in a tie for that position.
5. The administrator shall act as the coordinator of activities of The Mega Society, answer inquiries which are not within the jurisdiction of other officers, and shall be the sole member with the authority to represent the Society to the public. The administrator may appoint members individually or to a committee in order to allow members to handle administrative duties such as fund raising, preparing brochures, assisting in the formulation of admission standards, composing a manual of standard operating procedures and similar projects. The member or committee chair shall report to the administrator or other officer as the administrator directs. Members and committees may suggest projects and volunteer to do them on their own initiative.
6. The editor shall publish or cause to be published at least ten times annually the newsletter of the Society including therein all official business of the Society and such additional material as may be of interest to the members and subscribers. The editor shall be responsible for administering the voting process consistent with the bylaws of the Society. The editor shall include a list of current members in the first newsletter of each calendar year.
7. The membership officer shall handle all the routines necessary for maintaining records pertaining to members, for accepting new members into the society and for expelling members except that all such actions must not conflict with any of these bylaws.
8. The recording secretary-treasurer shall be personally responsible for the safeguarding of all Society funds received from membership fees, subscriptions, donations and other sources. The recording secretary-treasurer shall disburse funds as directed by majority vote of the officers for the necessary expenses related to the valid activities of the officers as specified in these bylaws. At such time as Society funds in the custody of the recording secretary-treasurer total \$500.00 or more based on the value of the US dollar on January 1, 1984 the recording secretary-treasurer shall be bonded as to those funds.

The recording secretary-treasurer shall handle the routines necessary to complete the voting procedures as outlined in these bylaws and to keep any records and perform any duties as might be necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of this office as specified in these bylaws.
9. The international secretary shall be responsible for recruiting new members outside of North America and for publicizing the Society outside of North America. The international secretary may perform these activities for North America at the discretion of the administrator.

10. In case of incapacity, resignation or recall of the administrator, the duties of the administrator shall be performed by the next available officer in the line of succession following the order of offices as listed in rule 1. of this Article (VI). "Available officer" is an officer of the Society who is actually holding office and handling the responsibilities of that office. If it appears that the office of the administrator will be vacant for longer than 30 days, the membership may elect a new administrator as soon as is practicable.
11. In the case of incapacity, resignation or recall of any officer other than the administrator, the administrator shall appoint a member (officer or otherwise) to perform the duties of the vacated office. If it appears that the vacancy will persist for longer than 60 days, the membership may elect a new officer for that position as soon as is practicable.
12. In any election where the candidate for office is not unopposed, each candidate shall be entitled to make one statement of up to 1½ pages in which to present qualifications and intentions.
13. Members wishing to hold office are expected to place their own name in nomination. Members who are nominated for office by another member have the right to decline the nomination. Nominations are to be submitted to the editor.
14. All Society records in the possession of any Society officer may be examined by any member at any reasonable time except that records pertaining to a member's test scores and a member's personal finances shall be confidential and withheld from the membership and from the public unless a member requests on that member's own initiative that such information may be released.
15. An officer of the Society must be a member of the Society. This shall not be construed to mean that the administrator may not appoint non-members for certain functions which may be required in the future such as an expert to supervise testing, an attorney to represent the Society in legal matters, an accountant to audit the books, etc.
16. Any officer shall be recalled upon a majority vote of all the votes cast. A recall vote shall proceed upon presentation to the editor a valid petition signed by 5 members or 15% of the membership, whichever is greater. The editor shall have up to 15 days to audit the petition prior to publication. The reason for recall need not be stated in the petition. The officer subject to recall may make a defense of up to four pages in the newsletter containing the notice of a valid recall petition or in the next issue of the newsletter. Ballots shall then be mailed to the members and must be returned to the editor within 15 days. If the editor is being recalled; the ballots shall be returned to the recording secretary-treasurer. An officer shall resign from office upon the reporting in the newsletter of a majority vote of the entire membership for recall.
17. An officer shall not initiate a recall action and shall not sign a recall petition. Officers may vote in any recall involving any officer.

18. When an officer leaves office for any reason the officer shall transfer all Society records and materials to the succeeding officer.
19. All officers shall submit a report to the editor by the 15th of February of each calendar year. The report should summarize the officer's activities and the information contained in the records of that officer. The reports shall be published in the next available newsletter.
20. The recording secretary-treasurer shall prepare an annual budget by December 15th of each calendar year setting forth the projected income and expense of the Society for the following calendar year. A majority vote of the officers shall approve the budget. Officers shall conduct society affairs in such a manner as to operate within that budget insofar as they hope to be reimbursed for their expenses relating to work done for the Society.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS AND CHANGES

1. Any member may propose any amendment to the bylaws or any change in the bylaws by requesting that the proposal be published in the newsletter. If one additional member supports the proposal in the next issue of the newsletter, that issue of the newsletter shall open a three issue special meeting to consider and vote on the proposal.
 - a. Ballot issues that do not conflict with any bylaw shall be passed upon a majority of all votes cast.
 - b. Ballot issues which conflict with any bylaw must resolve the conflict in the wording of the ballot and shall pass upon a two-thirds majority of all votes cast.
2. At such time as a board of directors is required to meet legal requirements of any governmental body, the officers of the Society shall also be the board of directors. Such board of directors shall be subject to the same bylaws as are the officers of the Society.
3. At such time as a constitution or charter is required to meet legal requirements of any governmental body, the officers of the Society shall write a constitution or charter based on the contents of the bylaws and not in conflict with the bylaws. Such a charter or constitution shall be subject to the same rules for amendment and change as are these bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII-Disputes

1. In any dispute relating to The Mega Society, members involved in the dispute shall make every effort to reach a settlement by direct communications.

If members cannot thus reach a settlement, they shall present the problem to any one or more officers of the Society for a decision.

If the problem remains unresolved, the disputants or aggrieved member shall present the matter to the ombudsman. →

2. The ombudsman shall investigate complaints received regarding any Society related activity of any member or officer, report findings and recommendations to those involved, and assist in achieving an equitable settlement. All official records of the Society relating to the dispute under investigation shall be available to the ombudsman.

The editor shall publish, in the Mesarian, findings and recommendations of the ombudsman and shall administer a vote on the dispute if so requested by the ombudsman.

3. The ombudsman shall be elected during the annual meeting of each odd numbered year by a majority of valid votes cast for the position.

4. The ombudsman shall be bound by the following rules from Article VI (Officers) except that for the purposes of this Article (VIII) the word "ombudsman" shall be substituted for the word "officer(s)", and the word "position" shall be substituted for the word "office":

Rule 2 (no majority vote), Rules 3 and 4 (tie votes), Rule 11 (incapacity), Rules 12 and 13 (campaign statement and nomination), Rule 15 (membership status), Rule 16 (recall), Rule 18 (transfer of records), Rule 19 (annual report), and Rule 20 (budget).

-FINIS-

News from Times Square (copyright 1996 by C.M. Langan)

It seems that Jojo Einstein somehow got ahold of *Noesis* 122. I'm afraid Jojo insists that I convey his opinions on Kevin's "Reply to Chris Langan's Response" (pp. 7-8). Before beginning, I'd like to make it clear that my own position, while not entirely in agreement with Kevin's, is somewhat less intransigent than Jojo's. I think that the Mega Society still has reason for hope. Nevertheless, he's my pal, so I have to give him his say. I hope nobody is offended by his bluntness. (Chris Langan)

Jojo Einstein, dressed to the nines in brand new floppy shoes and billowing dayglo psychoegoofic paisley coveralls, emerged from the Bijou Movie Theater in midtown Manhattan, the expression on his big Gene Simmons-painted mug one of pure rapture. He turned around to lovingly regard the marquee one more time. *Killer Klowns From Outer Space* was his favorite cinematographic masterpiece, and he saw it as often as he could afford to. Man, those karniverous Klowns were a riot and a half! Not much of a plot, really, but it was one of the few flicks around that had karacters with whom Jojo could really *empathize*. Like for instance, that titanic King Clown who pops out of the spaceship at the end. And talk about your special effects! After at least a hundred viewings, he was still trying to figure out that T. Rex hand silhouette trick. Although he usually found alien comedic technology a piece of cake, he still couldn't get his own Jurassic Parkosaur to gobble up any more than two real spectators at a time.

Looking down to keep track of his own subtle, unwilling finger machinations, the clown spotted something pinned to the pavement by one of his huge ducklike feet. No sooner had his white-gloved mitt touched it than he knew what it was: the latest edition of that ratty hi-Q club snotrag, *Noesis*. And the name of his best buddy, Chris Langan, was on the cover in bold print! Against his better judgment, he ruffled its grubby pages until he came to Kevin Langdon's "Reply to Chris Langan's Response".

Jojo, his next mark still bumbling complacently through Manhattan's concrete canyons like a rat lost in a maze, scanned Langdon's letter. Yeah, it was a little patronizing, maybe. But considering the source, he saw nothing to get too riled about...until, that is, he got to the part about "the Polish Godfather, who makes you an offer you can't understand." The clown's bloodshot eyes screeched audibly to a stop and popped into reverse. What the...? The longer he stared at it, the less sense it made. The Godfather makes you an offer, *you're* too dumb to understand it, and *he's* the one who's Polish? Kevin Langdon was a nice guy and all, but he'd obviously been living on the West Coast too long. Not only had he bungled the punchline, but he'd apparently forgotten who owned the *humor franchise* on this rag!

Jojo flashed on that tired old joke about the guy with IQ problems. See, this guy goes to the doctor, complaining that he can't spell or do simple math anymore. The doc takes one look at him and says, "There's only one treatment for your malady - a brain

transplant!" So the guy says to the doc, "But there's gotta be a ten year waiting list." "Not so", says the doc. "We have three brains right here. One's from a New Yorker, one's from a Texan, and one's from a Californian." "That's great!", says the guy. "How much?" "Well", says the sawbones, "it's a grand for the New York brain, ten grand for the Texas brain, and a hundred grand for the California brain." The guy scratches his noggin. "Uh, this may seem like a funny question, but why's it so much for the California brain?" "For the obvious reason, of course," says the doc. "It's never been used!"

Jojo shook his huge curly-wigged head. California was definitely LA-LA land, and outside of Silicon Valley, you just weren't going to find a lot of rocket scientists. It was a well-known fact that your average Californian was sillier than a little girl in mommy's heels. Maybe it was something in the air, like Mexican brown or crack smoke. But then again, why be discriminatory about it? The truth of it was, you couldn't turn your back on any of these IQ geeks for a second. As soon as you did, they'd start acting like they owned the place! Unfortunately, since they were all born with banana skins glued to their soles, they always belly-flopped to a hard landing before clearing the front stoop.

For example, take Kevin (please!). There he was, lecturing poor Chris Langan on how he'd better grow up, face reality, and figure out how to get his stuff noticed by "enough people, or important enough people", so that nobody's fingers got sticky. Well, no kidding! Next thing you knew, he'd be telling Langan how to work a can opener so he could peel the lid off Fort Knox and walk out with all the gold in his pockets. Langan's problems went way beyond just getting somebody's attention, but they'd already been laid out and Jojo didn't feel like repeating them.

Anyhow, that wasn't the half of it. Before even getting around to telling Langan where his tush was located, Kevin had delighted once again in grinding Ricky Rosner's fantabulous 8-vote editorial "landslide" into his mortally wounded pride like acid-spiked rock salt! Man oh man, knew this guy not the meaning of mercy? Why, it was almost enough to make you wonder how many times he'd exercised his democratic right to vote (by the enthusiastic tone of his previous comments, Jojo guessed at least five or six). Evidently, nobody had told him that (a) Langan had never officially enrolled as a candidate, largely because he regarded the editorship as a pain in the backside and merely wanted Ricky to do his job; (b) if the votes had been tallied when they were supposed to be tallied, the results would have been a goose-egg tie; and (c) Langan never would have mentioned the stupid "election" if somebody else, apparently seeking a high-level cabinet post, hadn't mentioned it first. Jojo had heard of riding political coattails before, but this was getting ridiculous! Especially after Ricky had repeatedly come out against something fundamental to the existence of Kevin and the Mega Society alike, namely the feasibility of high-end IQ testing (if there was one thing that constantly amazed Jojo, it was the multilayered spit shine on Rick's soggy high-tops)

But what really bugged Jojo the most was this. Kevin, like certain other members of the

Mega Society, was inordinately fond of what you might call "incomprehensible claims of incomprehensibility". Claiming that someone else's viewpoint is generally "incomprehensible" without adducing specific incomprehensible components is just a strategy to avoid being shown up for a doofus. See, if you actually tell somebody what it is you find "incomprehensible" about a piece of their writing, and he can go into the same piece of writing and show how it contained enough info to let any intelligent reader comprehend that particular part, then you're winner-take-all in the dunce competition. Taking that risk was always a critic's duty, but Kevin and his buddies were simply too "smart" to do what was right...especially after some of them had already tried it and met their match. Jojo didn't want to say that Kevin Langdon was dumb; quite the contrary. It was just that Kevin's brilliant impression of a polemical greased pig had Jojo slavering for a salver ringed with Kosher bacon.

The problem Langan *really* faced in the Mega Society wasn't an incomprehensible writing style. Langan used correct English, put his ideas in the form of clauses, sentences and paragraphs, and wrote in a way that should have let anybody identify and request clarification on specific points. The problem was this. It's bad enough when you have to write for the logically illiterate. It's even worse when you learn that some of these illiterates feel that their "high IQ's" entitle them to an incredible level of sanctimony regarding their own illiteracy. But it's sheer torture when their final response to your standing offer of specific, point-by-point clarification is to justify their own rejection of your offer by tacitly relying on the sad examples of others who have previously, and just as wrongly, done the same thing.

Okay, so it was tough to believe that anybody could be smart enough to solve the problems that Chris Langan had been solving. He understood that. That's why he'd always gone the extra mile by constantly offering clarification, and by carefully reading and responding to the contributions of others so that they could see what it was that he was asking for. Why, he had even put himself to the trouble of solving several famous and allegedly insoluble math problems for the Mega Society's most famous and mathematically literate member! But again, even when there was an advance agreement regarding acknowledgement, nobody would (a) admit in print that he'd solved the problems, (b) point to an "error", or (c) make a request for point-by-point clarification. In fact, nobody could even explain in any coherent way what it was about Langan's approach that was so "confusing"! The plain and indisputable fact was that Langan could solve major, rock-hard problems dead-bang, and anybody who gets a glimpse of that kind of ability in a supposed "nobody" is probably gonna get scared and clam up. But that was *their own problem*, and Jojo was a suck-egg mule if he'd let his best buddy take all the heat while they played in the shade.

After all, it wasn't as though the Mega Society lacked a rarificative entrance standard. You'd think that the members would respect each other just for *getting in*, and that cooperation would flow like milk and honey in the Promised Land. But instead, what

they seemed to love most was treating each other like no-account loonies! For years, Langan had been telling them that it wasn't enough just to tattoo "genius" on their inner eyelids, solve a few puzzles, and carp at each other. If you're gonna belong to a Society for the Incredibly Gifted, you can't just make like Joe or Josephine Blow. You gotta *do something extraordinary*, and sometimes that takes *teamwork*. Sure, Jojo knew that "other people have their own interests and concerns". Who didn't? But the whole idea of forming a group of any kind, let alone a group for the celebration of its own supergeniushood, is supposed to be *group interest*. Members are supposed to make an effort to understand other members. Lord knew, Langan had made this effort on behalf of others, even when their ideas were logically inconsistent and therefore *literally* incomprehensible. So didn't he have the right to expect a little intelligent feedback in return?

For example, take Langan's neglected 1989 paper *The Resolution of Newcomb's Paradox*. Despite its direct mathematical style, not a single Noesis-reading egghead was able to make out its basic ideas. So Langan had sent a notification to Chris Cole's one-time acquaintance, Professor Robert "Bigshot" Nozick, the guy whose academic career had benefitted the most from writing about Newcomb's paradox. In fact, it had benefitted so much that Nozick had become the head of the Department of Philosophy at the favorite *alma mater* of spoiled little darlings everywhere, Harvard University. But guess what - no reply! This had puzzled Langan, since even though a big important guy like Nozick obviously has his "own interests and concerns", one of those interests and concerns happens to be Newcomb's paradox. Just in case Nozick had been ill or on sabbatical or something, Langan wrote two more times, each time including a stamped, self-addressed envelope with his letter. No response was forthcoming.

Then Jojo had gotten wise and set poor Chris Langan straight. See, what Langan hadn't realized was that Professor Nozick was such an other-worldly, ethereal "genius" that he *didn't even have to acknowledge it* when somebody notified him, in a sane and intelligent way, of a possible resolution of the paradox on which he'd built a good chunk of his academic reputation. Jojo bowed his great greasepainted head in worshipful respect for the good Professor. Just like Appel and Haken, the two guys who had determined to the best of their magnificent ability that the human brain alone was inadequate to solve the Four-color problem, Nozick was clearly *too good* to talk to anybody claiming to know better. Why, Jojo felt like building a monument to the "intellectual greatness" of all of these yokels for everything they'd done to convince the world that if *they* couldn't solve a certain problem, then *nobody* could! (and damn that miserable Langan for not camping under their bedroom windows every night, serenading them with a flamenco guitar and a rose between his teeth like anybody "smart" would have done). The clown's eyes roamed eagerly over the sidewalk in search of suitable building materials, but lit on neither broken toothpicks nor used bubblegum. A high-IQ geek must have stumbled by, magnetizing everything to his wingtips and conveying it to the nearest Mensa bar. And Jojo had missed the score!

Anyhow, what it all came down to was this. The "reality" that Kevin Langdon wanted Langan to face wasn't a hard, natural reality like the laws of physics. It was a soft, mushy, and completely unjustifiable reality created and perpetuated by people with attitudes exactly like Kevin Langdon's. Who was kidding whom? Jojo, who made his living as a scam artist, always knew a scam when he saw one, and the Mega Society had looked more and more like a tin-plated boondoggle with each one of the last seven years. The scam that it had pulled on poor Chris Langan was simply a twist on the old bait-and-switch routine. Langan had been *baited* with the promise of a superintelligent, supersympatico audience with whom to share his ideas. But then the bait had been *switched* with the blind monkey, the deaf monkey, and the mute monkey, sitting there in a neat little simpering row with their tails curled around each other for protection.

Yeah, it was time to face facts. Over the last seven years, Chris Langan had solved several big, name-brand problems and paradoxes in logic, mathematics, physics, and metaphysics, in the process inventing several new and useful mathematical structures. Furthermore, he had taken reasonable steps to get the attention of parties who, because their own "interests and concerns" intersected directly with Langan's, should not have played dead. Meanwhile, the Mega Society had sat there like a frog on a log in a foggy smoggy California bog, niggling over dead flies and making wisecracks about the Polish Mafia. And there was nothing, but nothing, that Kevin Langdon or anybody else in the Mega Society could do or say to change that sorry scrap of reality.

Nevertheless, just to show there were no hard feelings, Langan was gonna give Kevin and his pals one more chance. Right after Jojo signed off, there was gonna be a kindygarten-level review of one of Langan's contributions, complete with an invitation to say something intelligent. If nobody bit, then there would be no reason in the world that Jojo, much less Chris Langan himself, should continue to respect the intellect of anyone in the Mega Society. It would simply have to go down as an IQ disparity thing, advantage Langan, and that was gonna be writ large in titanium-clad granite.

The clown dropped the rag back where he'd found it. For all he personally cared, the Mega Society could go right on wasting oxygen and casting the world's tiniest shadow. He and Langan had already spent far too much time trying to spark the interest and understanding of do-nothing, pathologically self-absorbed high-IQ "geniuses", and not enough on the real world. Things had finally become clear: they would have to go straight to the rabble. Yeah, the man on the street was a galoot, but at least he'd be somewhat more likely to admit it...and to recognize smarts elsewhere than in a mirror. Soon, it was gonna be "genius time" for real.

On Newcomb's Paradox (copyright 1996 by C.M. Langan)

In December of 1989, I published a paper entitled *The Resolution of Newcomb's Paradox* in *Noesis* 44. In *Noesis* 121, Ronald K. Hoefflin states in effect that previous

attempts to resolve Newcomb's paradox have failed due to an overemphasis on certain empirical "transactions" at the expense of others in subjective calculations of utility. I assume that Ron is including my own paper in the class of failed resolutions.

As any metaphysician should know, it is impermissible to construct an artificial barrier between probability theory, which forecasts the likelihood of certain *real* events, and questions about the ultimate nature of *reality*. In computing probabilities, we must open-mindedly consider every relevant possibility regarding the nature of reality, no matter how unlikely it may seem. In my 1989 resolution of the paradox, I described reality as a hierarchy of nested computational processes in order to demonstrate the logical possibility of the semi-omniscient being called "Newcomb's demon". This "nested simulation tableau" - which, for present purposes, may be simplistically envisioned as a computer within a computer within a computer..., and so on - is the minimal and most general logical framework in which one can explain the demon's perfect record. For the sake of illustration, it allows the demon to be metaphorically described as a "programmer" who, existing within a higher level of the nested simulation, has projected himself into the physical level as a "software homunculus" that can "pre-program" your decision and its outcome in a physically undetectable way.

This might sound bizarre, so let's take a closer look. Fancy yourself sitting at a highly sophisticated desktop computer, a simulated world on your ultrahigh-resolution 3-D monitor. To the people in this world, all of whom you regard as software constructs, the monitor's pixels (picture elements) are "space", and the changes in pixel states are "time". They can see neither you nor the circuitry by which you control them; as far as they might be concerned, you and your circuitry exist in a "higher logical dimension". You have programmed yourself into their pixel-universe as one of them, sharing whatever species of "consciousness" their mode of being may allow. But unlike them, your personal homunculus is directly in touch with *you*, and you have the power of God

Because you are in charge of not only your "pixel reality", but the sensory, cognitive and emotional processes of its inhabitants, there is no empirical effect or belief that you cannot create. By directly controlling their input modalities and rational processes, you can make them perform physical measurements in a Lorentzian way dependent on their relative velocities, enacting special and general relativity. You can wrap the simulation back into itself at the edges, create a "big bang"-style microwave background, and toss in some cosmic redshift. You can even make quantum data jump nonlocally from one section of the screen to another. Any physical, rational or emotional law you can imagine can be programmed directly into their experience. It doesn't even have to be consistent with the structure of your viewing screen, at least as understood by the screen's residents. You can even let them build computers and program their own little simulated worlds, smirking as you invisibly control their every "godlike" decision. This might even make you feel downright megalomaniacal...until you consider the possibility that the room in which you are playing god exists on the "monitor" of a higher god still!

Notice that the nested simulation model is not merely a cellular automaton. Granted, the pixels in your monitor have sufficient structure to perform certain functions autonomously; indeed, they necessarily embody the distributed programming of your own "hyperuniverse". But distributed programming, which you have utilized at your convenience, is ultimately a limitation that you have spared yourself. Instead of making each and every pixel a primary target of your programming, you have concentrated on the sets of pixels occupied by "minds" and "observers" - a designation which for some purposes includes inert matter - controlling them on a rational, not merely empirical, level. That way, you can create certain subjective impressions regarding intervening pixels...for example, that distances, durations and masses vary according to special relativity. To do this, you have merely made sure that your screen is extremely fine-grained relative to the cognition of its inhabitants, and programmed its ultra-minute pixels for variable aggregation as "quanta". Thus, simulated beings can never determine what a "true pixel" actually is. As far as they are concerned, physical data are quantized, but the data matrix is a virtual continuum in which space, time, and material attributes like mass can be arbitrarily distorted according to relativity theory.

Assuming for the sake of illustration that your name is "Newcomb" and that your personal software homunculus is "Newcomb's demon", a number of interesting possibilities are available to you. You can have your demon put simulated money in simulated boxes and offer wagers to simulated subjects about their contents, making sure that the rational processes of these subjects conform to your demon's predictions and that the appropriate rewards await them. Then, in a masterful stroke of irony, you can create interminable arguments among the simulated members of simulated high-IQ Societies, some of whom, in an especially amusing way, maintain on the basis of very scant logic that you can't possibly exist! Why, the possibilities are simply endless.

Naturally, some of the members of such IQ societies will believe that they possess free will, and that they can confound any prediction that anyone else has made about their future behavior. However, since freedom and constraint are complementary cybernetic concepts, no scientific attempt to prove the existence free will can rely on deterministic constraints like laws of physics. Since this completely rules out the possibility of empirical confirmation, a proof of free will can only be rational. But where you have set the rules governing the rational processes of your simulated beings, you need not have made this possible for them. You might instead have programmed them to *think* that they possess free will in spite of their inability to prove it on their own. In this case, the demon offers them more than just money; he offers them proof that they ultimately possess nothing but obedience to your anonymous will (which, in the absence of your personal attention, takes the form of a random function).

There is another interesting fact to note about the nested simulation tableau, which in the CTMU is referred to as the "NST" (with the mnemonic pronunciation "nest"). To wit, its hierarchical nesting of computative spaces can be logically condensed into one

space, the one we actually inhabit. In this case, programmers can look like ordinary people, and the tools by which they work their "magic" change from hyperlogical circuitry to possibly undetectable nonlocal "fields" with arbitrary logical and spacetime connectivity. Such fields, which are analogous to laws of physics, might then serve as mechanisms of precognition or telepathy, or even enable the construction of weird devices like "brain rays" which allow one person to control another.

In its "sanest and most reasonable" form, the NST becomes physical reality as we know it. Today's technological advances are yesterday's "magic", begging to be used by advanced cultures to dazzle, hoodwink and subjugate relatively backward ones, and free will is restored to its former confused status. In any case, the NST merely represents a set of rational possibilities generated by our own thought processes, and we need not concern ourselves (yet!) with the specific possibility to which it "collapses".

The given resolution of Newcomb's paradox applies unequivocally to any subject who is unable to prove on the spot that reality is not NST-structured. Such a subject cannot rule out the possibility that a virtually omniscient being exists relative to this level of the nested simulation, and in the absence of any other explanation, must allow for that possibility in calculations of utility. While the NST needed to be developed in far more detail than I did in my paper, the immediate burden of proof was not on me; I was not the one claiming certainty regarding the demon's power. It is instead on anybody who claims rational certainty of the demon's *powerlessness* (e.g., as Chris Cole once did). The subject's decision must in any case be made relative to his state of knowledge, and I needed only to show that this state is not as simple as it might seem.

Is this an endorsement of "subjective probability"? Yes and no. It implies that subjective probability is sometimes all that one has, and must in that case be utilized. On the other hand, it does not imply that subjective probability is the only kind that exists. But Ramsey's occupation with "degree of belief" is secondary in this instance, because the open-ended perfect record of Newcomb's demon - which Ron left out, but which explicitly provides information regarding every phase of the "purposive act" in which a subject desires money (D), decides whether and how to bet (A), bets (G), and gets his money (Q) - provides unlimited confirmation of omniscience once its *possibility* has been tentatively established. This possibility is not a matter of empirical data, but of rational inquiry. Newcomb's paradox may have been intended as a curve ball to Ramsey, but if so, then it was a wild pitch, since either (a) the Newcomb scenario is absurd, in which case subjective probability theorists need not answer it; or (b) it is sound, in which case the above resolution is applicable *a fortiori*. As a face-off between the rational and empirical aspects of probability theory, Newcomb's paradox is brilliant; as a way to undermine subjective probability, it shoots itself in both feet.

It must be noted that the nested simulation model, regardless of how useful or credible we may or may not find it, is not the immediate point of the resolution. The point is that

there cannot under any circumstances exist an irresolvable contradiction between empirical data and the reality that generates it. In the face of any such contradiction, we are forced - on rational grounds and by purely rational means if necessary - to seek a structure compatible with the data. In order for probability theory to have any value at all, our rational and sensory faculties must function in harmony; the subjective and objective aspects of probability must ultimately work together (i.e., homomorphically, as generically described in *Noesis* 121).

Is there an "absolute resolution" for Newcomb's paradox, one that has nothing to do with subjective probability? The only way to effect such a resolution (or to "absurdify" the paradox) would be to show decisively that reality does or does not conform to a "demonic" actualization of the NST. Some of us might be subjectively certain that it does not; but if so, then we are obliged to paradoxically dismiss an unlimited amount of empirical data if we take Newcomb's scenario seriously. Certainty, after all, requires proof...in this case, proof which can only be sought within the realm of metaphysics. That, and the obvious fact that probability theory alone is inadequate to provide a deep explanation of physical reality, is why we of the Mega Society have been talking about the CTMU for so long. Indeed, the CTMU can be partially if not exclusively regarded as the natural evolution of an attempt to produce an "absolute resolution" of Newcomb-like paradoxes. This process has already reached a point that would truly astonish anyone mentally able to handle the required background (present company hopefully included).

Since I'm asking people to be specific with me, I'm going to be specific with Ron. Ron's error is to state that the term "omniscient being" is semantically meaningless unless we have had "previous transactions with this being that would enable us to have acquired some information about the AG and GQ phases (that has been acquired from previous purposive acts)". In other words, Ron is saying that the meaning of "omniscient being" depends solely on empirical data, thus ruling out the possibility that this being, and the causative mechanism by which it works, are of a trans-empirical nature. But this is merely to choose empiricism over rationalism as a basis for understanding reality, leaving us to wonder how Ron justifies the choice he has made. Without such a justification, one's decision must allow for both empirical and rationalistic ingredients ... rationalistic ingredients like a logical hierarchy of nested computative processes. Ron is on the right track when he stresses the relationship of probability to reality; indeed, his preoccupation with the structure of a purposive act can be regarded as a profoundly rationalistic fixation. However, he fails to take account of the full extent of his subjective uncertainty, or his rational prerogatives, regarding this relationship.

In sum, I personally shot this paradox dead and nailed the lid on its coffin seven years ago in this very journal. Accordingly, I will now query Ron regarding his puzzling reluctance to acknowledge this hard, cold fact.

Ron, rumor has it that you consider me to be a "paranoid megalomaniac". Suppose

you're right. Then what kind of person are you, that you continually try to worsen my "condition" by refusing to acknowledge my attempts to communicate logically with you? In light of your own diagnosis, you seem to be practicing a particularly sadistic form of psychological torture. If you have a grain of pity left in your heart, then just tell me and everybody else how I'm "deluding myself" about this paradox. At least then I can seek treatment, or maybe just ask Kevin and Bob Dick to put me onto the right psychotropics.

And that goes for anybody else - e.g., Kevin Langdon, Chris Cole, or Rick Rosner - who might share Ron's insight into Newcomb's undead paradox. Maybe you could also let me in on exactly, *precisely* which parts of this explanation are "incomprehensible", so that I can try to improve my style and composition. Come on, Publisher Cole - you were the one who originally dragged this paradox before us (as I recall, it was right about the time you time you put your personal stamp of inviolability on the nested simulation model by stating flatly that we can't prove we're not "brains in the vat of a mad scientist"!). If it's anyone's responsibility to say something intelligent at this point, it's yours. So how about it? I keep solving problems, and you keep ducking the solutions. It's time to show the Mega Society what you can really *do*.

Or am I the only one who's not afraid to take that risk in *Noesis*?

On Paul Maxim's Application for Membership

As we're all aware, Paul Maxim has applied for membership to the Mega Society. To this end, he has presented a score of 178 IQ, achieved at the age of 10 years, on an exam called the Pintner Intermediate A (Verbal Series). In addition, he has provided other scores which, while they are not quite as high, are not so far out of the mega range as to cast fatal doubt on his peak score.

The Pintner Intermediate was at one time a widely administered test in this part of the country. Thus, it was extensively normed. Furthermore, it is professionally reputed to compare favorably with newer IQ tests, e.g., the Otis-Lennon Mental Ability Test, the Cognitive Abilities Test, and the Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test, which correlate well with warhorses like the Stanford-Binet, the CTMM, and Raven's Progressive Matrices.

Granted, the Pintner Intermediate has too little ceiling to serve as a test of high-range adult IQ. We don't need to see its problems to know this; it is reflected in the raw score-to-IQ conversion procedure. However, since it was designed for use at all grade levels (primary through secondary), it has enough ceiling for a pretty brilliant 10-year-old. So it looks to me like Paul has in fact presented a legitimate qualifying score, albeit on the basis of mental precocity rather than power.

There is very little doubt that IQ tests designed to measure adult intelligence (e.g., Ron's and Kevin's) are better for our purposes than those designed to measure mental

acceleration during childhood. Accordingly, Publisher Cole has called for a straw vote on Paul's application. However, we seem to be ignoring three salient facts.

1. IQ is not a popularity contest. Paul Maxim is applying for membership to the Mega Society, not running for King of the Prom. For whatever the old Mega Society Bylaws might still be worth, Paul is not supposed to need a majority vote.
2. Since most Mega members don't like to vote, there is a danger that qualification will become the sole prerogative of the same dilatory but curiously single-minded voting bloc that decided the recent editorial election. When it comes to elections, spin and timing are everything, and the editor and publisher have too much control for comfort.
3. Adult IQ testing is still in its infancy, and too much snobbery too early in the game can only have a choking effect on its development.

In other words, not only is there doubt regarding the legitimacy of the membership vote declared by Publisher Cole, but until somebody comes up with a precise differential comparison of adult IQ with IQ determined as a function of early mental acceleration, there is no coherent basis for rejecting any particular mainstream test as an instrument of qualification (provided that it is taken at an age for which it has adequate ceiling).

We all know about the animosity between Paul and Kevin. I think Kevin is basically a good sort, and I hate to see him get lambasted for what amounts to no good reason. However, I'd hope that we could accept Paul's word as a gentleman to curtail the vitriol in exchange for admission, given that there is currently an overwhelming coefficient of frustration on both sides. Personally, I know how it feels to get the patented Mega Society runaround - it's the old faceless opponent thing - and Paul has my empathy.

I don't want to see the Mega Society strangle itself in squabbles over parliamentary procedure and points of order. Too many high-IQ types are too fond of that kind of nonsense. To that extent, I agree with Chris Cole about the benefits of informality. But the price for its avoidance is fairness and uniformity, and Paul seems to have a point when he implies that some of our "higher-ranking" members may not always operate in a purely altruistic spirit. In fact, Paul has a point for sure.

In any case, if the proposed election goes against Paul, I personally will not consider it binding. Nor, as far as I'm concerned, need anybody else. Chris Langan.

[Once again, folks, here's your chance to look smart. Say something, even if it's just to show that you understand the fundamental logic of *The Resolution of Newcomb's Paradox* as described above in relatively simple language, and prove to the world that you, at least, aren't brain-dead. Sorry, but this ridiculous tail-chase has been going on for seven years, and everybody is fresh out of excuses. Good luck to non-flatliners!]

EDITOR'S COMMENTS ABOUT VOTING ON A CONSTITUTION AND VOTING ON PAUL MAXIM

In Noesis 121 (which was dated July but came out at the end of October), Chris Cole called for votes on whether we should have a constitution and officers and on whether Paul Maxim should be admitted.

I've talked to Paul Maxim. He says he hasn't given consent for his membership to be voted upon. He thinks it's premature.

I've talked to Kevin Langdon. He thinks that abruptly asking for a vote without setting up a formal procedure such as when the voting period will begin and end is unfair and illegitimate.

As you may have read in the preceeding article, Chris Langdon objects to voting on Paul Maxim (and to the recent vote as to whether I should remain editor).

I'd like Mega to continue to operate in the informal manner of the last few years, but these guys have a point. We're gonna have to discuss what should be done, and I solicit your comments.

A REVISED CALL FOR VOTES

Chris Cole

Paul Maxim complains that he has not given his permission for his membership application to be voted upon. I don't think we need it. He has applied for membership and it's up to us to decide how we will admit people, and him in particular.

Kevin Langdon (sorry about misspelling your name twice in "A Call for Votes" in the last issue!) complains that we should announce a definite voting period for admitting Paul Maxim (and presumably for the other issue I raised -- namely, should we have a constitution versus pure democracy). That's fair. I unilaterally propose a period of six issues or six months, whichever is longer. And issues 123 and 124 don't count toward the six. That should give us all plenty of time to debate the issue in print.

Chris Langan thinks we should admit Paul, and that the by-laws of the old Mega Society do not require a majority vote. Chris is of course entitled to his opinion (and vote) on the issue of admitting Paul, but I wish to challenge the part about the by-laws. Even if the by-laws of the old Mega Society have any validity (and of course I would dispute this), the actual admission procedure of the old Mega Society is by a majority vote of all officers of the Society. The current Mega Society has never had an election of officers, but I'd argue that making this a majority vote of the membership is certainly in the spirit of the by-laws. Contrast this, for example, with some objective numerical criteria on some specific set of tests.

Please send your comments for publication on these subjects to Rick Rosner, and your votes on both to Jeff Ward.

A QUICK NOTE ON NEWCOMB'S PROBLEM

Chris Cole

Chris Langdon has asked me (and others) to say what is wrong with his resolution of Newcomb's Problem. I'm not going to do that, but at least I'll explain why. In so doing, I repeat myself, but perhaps I was not clear. Many issues back, I suggested to Chris that rather than arguing about the very difficult Newcomb's Problem, he explain his solution to one of Ron Hoeflin's trial test problems. This was a problem that I thought was unsolvable, but Chris claimed to have a solution. He did explain his solution, but in the course of his explanation it became clear that he was assuming a certain metaphysical position, which he calls CTMU for short. But it is not surprising that from a different metaphysical position many unsolved problems can be solved; for example, many religious people have explanations of things that I would attribute to random chance. Metaphysical positions need testing against nature. Before I accept CTMU, I want to see it predict the result of some experiment that has not been predicted with the current orthodox metaphysics. I asked for this years ago, and I'm still waiting.