

Noesis

The Journal of the Mega Society

Number 134

August 1997

**Acting Editor—Chris Cole
P O Box 10119
Newport Beach, CA 92658-0119**

IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL

RESULTS OF MEGA SOCIETY ELECTION by Jeff Ward

CHES PROBLEMS by Jeff Ward

MY TUPPENCE WORTH ABOUT TEN BALLS by Robert Low

A NOTE ON CONFLICT by Robert Low

**A SHORT (AND BLOODY) HISTORY OF THE HIGH I.Q. SOCIETIES
by Darryl Miyaguchi**

The results of the election are in, and they are clear in some respects and unclear in others (see Jeff Ward's report for the numerical results). It is clear that the membership desires to ratify the concept that the Mega Society is open to anyone with one-in-a-million test scores, and that Ron Hoeflin's tests are capable of distinguishing intelligence at this level. Thus, we can conclude that the Society's historical focus on using these tests is ratified. In particular, Paul Maxim cannot be admitted on the basis of the test scores he has currently submitted.

We also have a volunteer for Editor, and since there was only one, there is no need for an election. Thanks to Kevin Langdon for volunteering, and the next issue (September, #135) will be edited by him.

What is unclear is what the bylaws of the Society will be. The voting on this was almost evenly divided across the proposals, with a lot of abstentions. Therefore, I think we need a period of time for discussion of the various proposals, followed by another vote. Since I've already argued for my simplified Bylaws, I'll keep quiet until I hear from the people who voted for either the original Bylaws or for the Langdon modifications.

While the membership voted overwhelmingly that the Mega and Titan tests are appropriate vehicles, they did not vote on the exact raw scores to be used. I'm told that

While the membership voted overwhelmingly that the Mega and Titan tests are appropriate vehicles, they did not vote on the exact raw scores to be used. I'm told that the old Mega Society voted to accept a score of 43 on the Mega Test and 175 on the LAIT. Since a raw score of 43 corresponds to the one-in-a-million level on Ron Hoeflin's latest norming of the Mega Test, this seems appropriate. However, Kevin Langdon has called this norming into question. As I understand it, Ron is using an adjustment factor near the top end of the test to adjust for "ceiling bumping." Kevin questions whether this factor is justified. I think it would make sense to see that issue debated in these pages also, again in preparation for a subsequent vote of the membership. Perhaps a committee of members could be formed to evaluate the raw data and make a recommendation.

We need some criterion for admitting people to the Society. For the time being, I suggest that we continue to use these scores for admission. Perhaps if Kevin becomes convinced that the "ceiling bumping" adjustment is legitimate, then 175 on the LAIT will correspond to the one-in-a-million level. Also, since the Titan Test was normed in the same way as the Mega Test, I suggest that we use the one-in-a-million level on its latest norming, which would be a raw score of 43. All of this is temporary, until a vote.

Chris Langan has sent around a newsletter claiming to be *Noesis, The Journal of the Mega Society*. Speaking for Jeff, Kevin and myself, and indeed all the other members of the Mega Society, let me make clear that while Chris can send around any newsletter he desires, he cannot claim to be publishing the Journal of the Mega Society. His newsletter has no association with the Society whatsoever, other than that Chris himself is a member. Also, needless to say, all claims that he has admitted Paul Maxim to the Society, that he has called off the election, etc. are illegitimate. In particular, subscription fees to *Noesis* should not be sent to Chris.

Subscription fees for *Noesis* are \$2.00 per issue, and should be sent to the address given above, made out to "Noesis." This \$2.00 covers the cost of production and distribution. However, in an attempt to encourage subscribers to submit quality material, I will extend a modified form of the previous policy giving credit for published material, to wit: if the Editor decides to publish a submission, the submitter will receive a free copy of that issue. Thus, if your subscription runs out at issue 135 (which you can tell by examining your mailing label), and something you submitted is published in issue 135, your expiration date is automatically extended to issue 136.

So, please, gather together some interesting ideas, write them down, and send them to our new Editor:

Kevin Langdon
P. O. Box 795
Berkeley, CA 94701
(510) 524-0345

RESULTS OF THE MEGA SOCIETY ELECTION OF 9/15/97

A. By-Law Proposals

1. Mega Society by-laws from the old Mega Society 2
2. Proposed revisions to the above 1
3. Proposed new, simplified by-laws 2
2 abstentions

B. Administrator of the Mega Society: Jeff Ward

Yes 6, No 1

C. Publisher of the Mega Society: Chris Cole

Yes 6, No 1

D. To be acceptable for admission purposes, a test must be credibly claimed to distinguish intelligence at the one-in-a-million level.

Yes 7, No 0

E. The Mega and Titan Tests by Ron Hoeflin are to be used for admission to the Mega Society

Yes 6, No 1

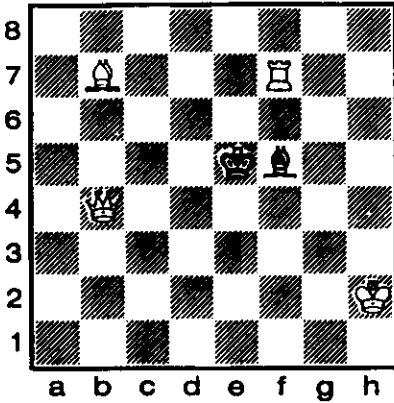


Jeff Ward

Chess Problems by Jeff Ward

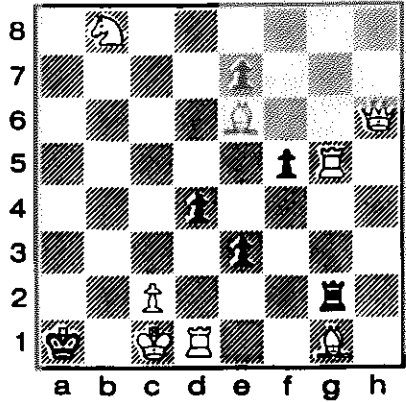
Answers to Problems 1 and 2

1.



White mates in two

2.



White mates in two

Both problems involve sweeping moves by the white queen that, at first glance, provide no obvious benefit. Both are also "block" problems. In a block problem, White's first move produces no direct threat. If Black could simply leave his pieces where they are, White could not follow with an immediate checkmate. But under the rules of chess, Black must move. In so doing, Black fatally weakens himself no matter what move he chooses.

Problem 1: Notice that in the diagram there is one unguarded square, e6, adjacent to the black king. With the first move, White sweeps his queen across the board to h4, giving up the guard on d8 and providing the black king with an additional "flight square." Black would be OK if he didn't have to move—but he does.

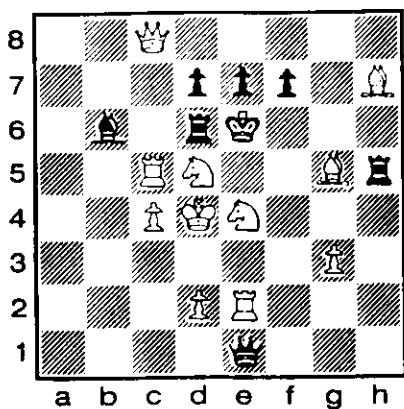
1. Qh4 (block)	2. Qe7
Kd6	Qf4
Be6	Qf6
B any, Ke6	

Problem 2: With the first move, White buries his queen in the corner at h1. Again, Black would be safe for now if he didn't have to move. But Black must move something. If Black moves the d4 pawn to d3, the white queen sweeps to the h8 corner for the checkmate. If Black moves his rook (other than to capture the pawn), the white queen sweeps to the a8 corner for the checkmate. These two possibilities are considered "thematic," since they help illustrate the theme of the white queen traveling to various corners of the board.

1. Qh1 (block)	2. Qh8
Pd3	Qa8
Rany	KxR
RxP+	Bxd4
Pe2	Ra5
Pf4	

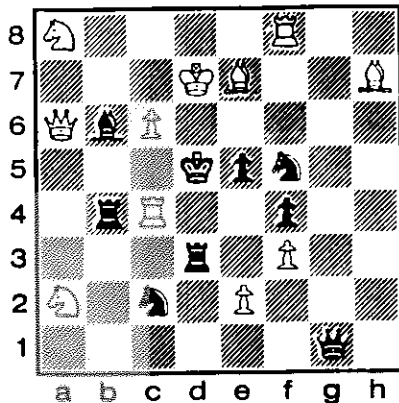
Chess Problems by Jeff Ward

3.



White mates in two

4.



White mates in two

Send solutions to: Jeff Ward, 13155 Wimberly Square, #284, San Diego, CA 92128.

Deadline = 12/1/97

My tuppence worth about ten balls

I'll get my disclaimer in first: in the following I will criticise what I understand to be Chris Langan's position on the ten balls problem that has been discussed somewhat in the pages of *Noesis*. I'm pretty sure Chris will feel this misrepresents his position, so I'll also get an apology in right here: Chris, I'm sorry if I've misunderstood you. But I've no objection to having the error of my ways pointed out in public if you still have the energy for it.

So, to state the problem (yet again). A closed box contains ten balls, each of which is either white or non-white. In keeping with my culturally offensive background, I shall refer to the non-white balls as coloured...oh, why quibble, I'll call them black. Right then, the box contains ten balls, each of which is either white or black. Four times you sample a ball at random from the box and return it. Each time, the ball sampled is white. What is the probability that all the balls in the box are white?

Answer: it depends on the distribution. We suppose the box is (in principle) taken from a collection in which the probability of choosing a box containing n white balls is $p(n)$. This may mean that the box is in fact taken from a large collection, or that the balls are put into the box randomly according to some distribution: it doesn't matter--but without some assumption equivalent to this the problem is not well-posed. It is simple then to work out the probability of four successive observations of a white ball given n white balls in the box, and Bayes' theorem allows us to work out the probability that the box did in fact contain ten white balls given such a collection of observations. The answer depends on the values of $p(n)$, and in the special case where all the $p(n)$ are equal, we obtain the result of about 0.67. Different prior distributions give different results.

However, Chris wants to argue that in some sense 0.67 is still the answer when we know nothing about the initial distribution. As far as I can see, his argument is that knowing nothing about the initial distribution entitles to make the assumption that all numbers of balls are equally likely: except that since white balls have been observed, we know that they can't all be black, so we assume that all numbers of white balls are equally likely except for zero. Then using Bayes' theorem gives the required result. I think there are two problems with this: the first is that there is an element of having one's cake and eating it. Using the observation of white balls to restrict the distribution and then claiming that nothing is known apart from the fact that they aren't all black is not consistent. The second is that I don't follow the step from 'we know nothing' to 'we can assume equal probabilities'.

But there is a way of approaching the problem which attempts to do what Chris claims to do. The set of all possible distributions can be modelled as the collection of points in eleven-dimensional space whose co-ordinates are all positive and whose co-ordinates sum to 1: the point $(p_0 \dots p_{10})$ represents the distribution where the probability of there being n white balls in a box chosen randomly from the distribution is p_n . For each such distribution, one can calculate the probability of the box containing ten white balls given that four samples are white; then one can integrate over the surface to find the expected

value of this probability. Roughly speaking, what Chris has done is to work out the probability of ten white balls for the distribution at the centre of gravity of the surface of distributions, rather than work out the probability for each distribution and then average them. The problem is that the function taking you from initial distribution to probability of ten white balls is not linear, and so a different result will be obtained.

Now, I'm pretty sure that Chris claims the following. If you repeat many times the prescription 'fill a box with white and black balls according to a randomly chosen initial distribution, sample it four times, and retain those boxes which gave a white ball on each sample', then in the limit, the proportion of those boxes you have retained which actually contain ten white balls will be approximately 0.67.

The problem is that because of the nonlinearity, this averaging process gives a different result. (I don't know what it is: my brain is too small to do the integral---for all I know, the answer could actually be 0.67, but if it is it's a huge coincidence.)

There's another, deeper, problem, namely the choice of measure on the surface that describes all possible distributions. Uniform measure induced by the choice of co-ordinates above will put the 'average' distribution at equal probabilities. Other choices of measure will give different 'best guesses'. It depends on how you split the universe up into exclusive events.

And finally, I know of nobody who says that the law of large numbers doesn't apply to balls in a box. If I have a box of balls, and repeatedly sample one ball from it, and the proportion of times I get white is about 0.4 after thousands of samples, I'd be pretty confident that there were 4 white balls in there. But I don't know what that has to do with the problem in hand...

Robert Low
email: r.low@coventry.ac.uk

A Note on Conflict

Something that's bothered me for some time is why it is that conflict between groups seems to be particularly vicious when the two groups are culturally similar. One possible answer is just that it catches the attention more when a couple of groups who seem similar start fighting, but I don't think that that is the answer.

My own suspicion is that this response to slight difference may be rooted in a fundamental psychological need of humans, namely that of distinguishing 'me' from 'not-me'. If you're the sort of critter who makes a living by making the environment adapt, rather than by adapting to it, then there is a clear evolutionary incentive for such a trait. This need is pre-rational, and drives a considerable amount of our early development. It strikes me that there may just be some carry over into cultural identity. If so, it is particularly plausible that cases where there is more potential for a mistake should be regarded with greater hostility than cases where the distinction is obvious. Thus, if for some reason boundaries are being drawn up between groups, the more culturally similar the groups are, the less tolerant of slight difference will each group be, and the more savagely will they treat outsiders.

There are various parallels to this. One of the most obvious is the reaction in the south of the US not so long ago to Negroes. A visibly black Negro, while treated with contempt and with scant regard to his rights, would be treated far better than a relatively fair-skinned one who had attempted to pass for white. Again, in religion: a fundamentalist Protestant sect, while taking it for granted that Roman Catholics are the spawn of Satan, will reserve its serious criticism for a group who splits away because of minor doctrinal differences.

This may sound defeatist. It isn't intended to be. Acceptance that some aspects of our behaviour may be influenced by genetics does not obviate the notion of moral responsibility. The brute fact that I may have a genetically determined propensity towards a certain type of behaviour does not refute the fact that I also have a choice about whether to follow my instincts or my conscious morality.

Robert Low
email: r.low@coventry.ac.uk

A Short (and Bloody) History of the High I.Q. Societies Maintained by Darryl Miyaguchi

Last updated: September 4, 1997

See bottom of page for Change History

6/28/97: The history is now as complete as I intend to make it. Future revisions will be logged. Most of this material is from the pages of In-Genius or Oath (i.e., Mr. Hoeflin has been a good source of information—any mistakes in translation should be attributed to me); a little has come from Marilyn vos Savant's book, *Omni I.Q. Quiz Contest*. Kevin Langdon has also contributed his comments. Some of the information presented here may be considered inflammatory, especially since I can't divine with certainty the underlying purposes of people's actions; if I have committed any inaccuracies, please contact me for corrections.

Some might wonder what relevance this soap-opera-ish tale has to the stated goals of the high-IQ societies. I would argue that in order to understand what these societies are about, one should understand their history, including the very human motivations that drove their foundations.

This history is in roughly chronological order.

The Chinese Mandarin Class (1 out of 100; 1 out of 10,000; 1 out of 1,000,000)

According to an article published in the Bulletin of the International Test Commission, and retold by Christopher Harding of Australia (founder of several high-IQ societies), intelligence tests were invented by the Chinese in the 7th Century A.D. The Mandarins who ran China for centuries were chosen by examinations that tested for memorization and understanding of the Confucian classics and, in so doing, screened for intelligence. Then Mandarin class was said to have three levels: the public service (top 1 percent of all candidates), the Mandarins (top 1 percent of the public service), and inspectors (top 1 percent of the Mandarins!)

High IQ Club with unknown name (unknown admissions requirement)

Christopher Harding writes that he has come across evidence from two different sources that a high IQ club existed in London, England in the 1890's. This predates the Binet, though not the Cattell. Harding suspects this club is associated with Sir Francis Galton.

The High IQ Club (1 out of 100)

Begun in 1938 by Dr. Lance L. Ware, a scientist and lawyer, at Oxford University; this club appears to be the forerunner of *Mensa*. Their requirement was the 99th percentile on the Cattell Verbal Test. It was

somewhat informal and produced no literature and became inactive after 1939 (during World War II).

Mensa (1 out of 50)

Founded at Oxford University in 1946 by Roland Berrill, a barrister, and Dr. Lancelot Ware, who later also became a barrister. The original aims were, as they are today, to create a society that is non-political and free from all racial or religious distinctions. Mensa welcomes people from every walk of life whose I.Q. is in the top 2% of the population. Mensa's primary emphasis is social. Some see this as one of the major attractions of the society and a key recruiting tool.

There are others who are disappointed with what Mensa has and has not become. At a 1996 convention celebrating the 50th anniversary of Mensa's founding, Dr. Ware (now 81 years old) voiced hope "that Mensa will have a role in society when it gets through the ages of infancy and adolescence ... but at least it has satisfied its members." Dr. Ware seemed disheartened by the Mensan's seeming inability to focus beyond self-gratifying pursuits and apply their collective brain-power to problems facing the world today. "I do get disappointed that so many members spend so much time solving puzzles," Ware said. "It's a form of mental masturbation. Nothing comes of it."

The Berkeley High IQ Society (Admissions requirement unknown)

Admission to this society, founded 3 months after Mensa was founded in the U.K., was based on College Admission tests to the University of California at Berkeley, which was similar to the American College Admission exams later taken by American students across the USA in the late 1940's. Defunct.

Tenta (1 out of 10)

Founded in 1959 at the 90th percentile, Tenta has been defunct for many years.

MM Society (1 out of 2,500 nominal, 1 out of 1,000 actual)

The MM Society (also known as "Double M") was founded in 1966 as a Mensa's Mensa, with the intent of accepting at the top 50th of the top 50th (one-in-2500) percentile. However, MM's actual qualifying scores were at almost exactly the one-in-1000 level. It does have the distinction of being the first of the "higher IQ" societies. After its founder died, it was taken over by Robert Kaufmann, who treated it as a joke, for which he got interviewed by Tom Snyder on national TV once. Hoeflin lists this as an inactive or defunct society as of the early 1980's. The society is said to have published an interesting journal.

Intertel (1 out of 100)

Intertel, which was originally known as the International Legion of Intelligence (members are still known as "Ilians"), was founded in 1966 by Ralph Haines and now has about 1700 members in over thirty countries. Its theme is "participation and excellence" both within the organization and in public life.

The Hundred (1 out of 100)

Founded in Melbourne, Australia by John Walsh in 1970 and became defunct in 1977. They had a 99-percentile admissions requirement on the Cattell higher form III (verbal scale) form b (supervised test) only. None other was considered as far as Chris Harding, who is the source of this information, knows.

The International Heurist Association (Admission based on high-IQ and proven creative ability)

Founded by D. H. Ratcliffe of Western Australia in 1970 and survived until 1973. It never had more than 19 members, and finally disbanded for lack of interest. Most members were above the 98th percentile in IQ and none were below the 95th percentile. All had proved creative ability—the basis for their selection was certification of an original idea by Professor I. J. Good. Chris Harding, who was a member, recalls this as an unusually productive group, writing that at least three members had major theories published around the time of the society's existence. This society became the inspiration for Chris Harding's own International Society for Philosophical Enquiry.

The Near Mensa (1 out of 20)

Founded in 1970 by a woman whose name Chris Harding doesn't recall; became defunct by 1972. With an advertising slogan that was apparently, "Failed Mensa? Join the Near Mensa," it's unsurprising that they went under.

The International Society for Philosophical Enquiry (1 out of 1,000)

In 1974, Australian Christopher Harding founded a society called MENS (Latin for the Mind) at the 99.97th percentile to "one-up" the MM society, which at the time had the highest requirement at 99.96 [nominal]. Mens later dropped its requirement to 99.9 and called itself "The Thousand," which in turn later adopted the name "International Society for Philosophical Enquiry" (1976).

The group presents itself as the high-achievement society that invites and expects creative contributions of its members. The society accepts scores

at the 99.9th percentile on standardized tests and designated unsupervised tests for admission. People join as Associates, on the basis of their potential; thereafter, they can attain the level of Member, Fellow, Senior Fellow, Senior Research Fellow and Diplomate by accumulating specified numbers of various 'achievement,' including such things as earning academic degrees, publishing, corresponding with other members, etc. The highest title, Philosopher, is awarded via election. Associate members, who represent about two-thirds of all ISPE affiliates, are not allowed to vote in ISPE elections.

The ISPE is directed by a Board of Trustees consisting of three to seven senior members. A former member of the society criticizes the members of the Board who "make decisions for the society and are answerable to no one." This person also objects "that contested elections are a rarity, with the decisions of the leadership routinely rubber-stamped, that no dissent is permitted in *Telicom* [the society's journal], and that the ISPE [Board of Trustees] continues to expel people without affording them the opportunity to present a defense and without recourse to a vote of the membership." As far as I can tell, as an outsider, this assessment appears to be supported by the events of the ISPE's history.

ISPE used to use a 70-item vocabulary test called the Vocab A and a 136-item vocabulary test called the Vocab B. The original Harding Skyscraper test had a 10-item vocabulary test that [Hoeflin believes] was later called the Vocab C. When the ISPE required a 99.9 percentile score on both an I.Q. test and one of these vocabulary tests, it concluded that a person who could pass both tests would be about one-in-2000 in AQ ("Ability Quotient"). The vocabulary test requirement was dropped in 1989 since most IQ tests already test verbal ability; moreover, it was deemed unfair to non-English speakers to discriminate on the basis of an English-language vocabulary test. Another factor in the change was that there was no way to control cheating on the vocabulary tests.

The ISPE Vocabulary test 'B' can be found in its entirety with answers and percentile rankings in the book, *The Ultimate IQ Book*, by Marcel Feenstra, Philip J. Carter, and Christopher P. Harding, 1993 (ISBN 0-7063-7148-8). I have been informed that the ISPE Vocabulary test 'A' can be found (presumably in its entirety with answers and percentile rankings) in a book by the same authors, *The Ultimate IQ Challenge*. This was published in maybe 1994 or 1995.

The ISPE used to accept Hoeflin's *Mega Test* scores for admission, but dropped its acceptance of that test in 1992¹. The society also doesn't

¹ The ISPE stopped accepting the *Mega Test* during an exchange of hostile letters between Hoeflin and its [then] president, Betty Hansen, who took umbrage at Hoeflin's publishing Kevin Langdon's lampoons of the ISPE conduct, in early issues of *Oath*. It seems clear to me that there is a cause-effect relationship here, hidden behind ISPE's official rationale of

accept Kevin Langdon's LAIT. Christopher Harding's own W-87 is accepted, though, despite being unsupervised, heavily dependent on vocabulary, and subject to cheating since it prohibits reference aids. The W-87 does, however, have the advantage of being normed under the supervision of an "accredited psychologist," according to an ISPE representative. The disadvantage is that an adequate report on its norming has never been published. When the Triple Nine Society Psychometrics Committee asked Harding for data on the norming of his tests he said that he had discarded it. It is also unclear to me whether or not the accredited psychologist presiding over the W-87 norming was actually Chris Harding himself.

Kevin Langdon's response to the ISPE's official rationale is this: "What many people, even in the highest-level societies, do not realize is that psychometrics is a science, though a relatively inexact one. The relevant question with regard to scientific work is whether its methodology is correct, not whether it is performed by a member of the priesthood."

401 Society (1 out of 10,000)

A "secret" society founded by Chris Harding in 1975 for the 3 or 4 people who had managed to reach or exceed the one-in-10,000 level on his Skyscraper test. The society is now defunct.

Four Sigma Society (1 out of 30,000)

The Four Sigma Society was founded by [then] ISPE member Kevin Langdon in 1977. The society was active for about six years (1977 - 1983). Kevin edited four issues of the society's journal Sigma Four, with an average interval of two months. George Koch edited eight issues from 1980 to 1983, with an average interval of six months. The society accepted only one test, the Langdon Adult Intelligence Test (LAIT), on which an I.Q. score of at least 164 was required (later, other Langdon tests were also accepted).

When the LAIT was published in *Omni*, in the April 1979 issue, it was taken by over 25,000 people, resulting in many new recruits for Four Sigma.

Unfortunately, the large volume of responses to his test (which is no longer scored), coupled with Kevin's propensity for tardiness, also produced numerous complaints of late or non-existent score reports. *Omni* eventually sued Kevin for one million dollars (which they never collected).

Kevin did eventually score the backlogged test answer sheets.

During the late 80's, the society was briefly revived, but it is now defunct again.

only accepting "psychologist-approved tests which have been properly normed and validated."

Triple Nine Society (1 out of 1,000)

The Triple Nine Society was founded in 1979 as a more democratic alternative to the ISPE by Richard Canty, Ronald Hoeflin, Ronald Penner, Edgar Van Vleck, and Kevin Langdon, who was the driving force. At that time a small group of early members of the ISPE, largely under the direction of C.R. Whiting (ISPE's first elected president), had suddenly introduced an autocratic setup that would perpetuate their control of the society, which up to that point had been set up more democratically². Whiting evidently resented Kevin for "upstaging" the ISPE's king-of-the-hill status with its 99.9th percentile minimum requirement by founding the Four Sigma Society in 1978 with its one-in-thirty-thousand minimum requirement. Whiting's response to the establishment of the Triple Nine Society was immediate:

all five members stopped receiving the ISPE journal, *Telicom*, and they were informed six months later that they had been expelled from the society by a secret "Ethics Committee," whose members' identities are still unknown nearly twenty years later. Hoeflin writes that his own infraction was apparently that he agreed to serve as ombudsman for the new Triple Nine Society, which the ISPE's leader construed as an attempt to "destroy" the ISPE. Expulsion procedures have been a consistent source of criticism directed at the society by former members (see also entry for Cleo Society).

Joe O'Rourke, at the time editor of the ISPE journal, *Telicom*, refused to be a party to the actions of Whiting and company, but didn't want to embroil himself further. He wrote a scathing denunciation of the ISPE leadership and resigned from the editorship and the society—but he was not one of the founders of TNS, as I have written earlier.

Ronald Hoeflin served as Editor for 63 of the first 100 issues of the Triple Nine Society's journal, *Vidya*. From around September 1985 to January 1989, he managed to eke out a living from that job. At the time when Hoeflin became Editor, the society was having a hard time finding anyone willing to do the job. Hoeflin presented the society with a proposal under which he would be paid a flat amount per issue of *Vidya* produced.

At TNS election period 1987, Hoeflin supplied advance copies of writings by those with views opposed to his own (submitted for the election issue of *Vidya*) to their political enemies, who were thus able to reply in the same issue. He published this election issue after he was ordered by the TNS Executive Committee to withdraw it until it had been substantially revised. For this action, the Committee decided to replace Hoeflin as Editor.

The election resulted in two Executive Committees, each claiming legitimacy. When TNS' funds were turned over to the Financial Officer (Barry Zalove) belonging to the new faction, they continued to pay Ron to

² I'm not exactly sure what Hoeflin is referring to here, but I am guessing it could be related to Whiting's communication, titled "A Declaration of Policy," which led to six amendments to the ISPE charter.

produce Vidya. Later, that committee fired Ron as Editor. Ron dropped out of the society altogether.

By the time of Hoefflin's removal, he says he could no longer earn a living this way anyway, since constant squabbles and infighting had reduced membership from a peak of 750 to a bare 400. Continued contention in TNS has led to continued membership decline. Current membership is about 160. Ironically, the Triple Nine Society no longer accepts Kevin's own tests for admission because of Paul Maxim's campaign (see entry under the Mega Society). Kevin tried to exert his influence upon the current admissions officer to keep listing his LAIT as an acceptable test, but to no avail.

The High-IQ Society (1 out of 10)

Announced in the early 1980's with a 90th percentile requirement like Tenta; used a mailing list supplied by Kevin Langdon of people who had tried his LAIT, but this group did not get off the ground.

The 606 Society (6 out of 1,000,000)

The 606 Society, founded by Christopher Harding, was originally named the 501 Society, which was founded in 1980. This latter society had a 99.999 (1 in 100,000) requirement. Later the requirement was raised to the 99.9994 percentile (6 per million) and the society was renamed 606. Still later, all members of the 606 Society were inducted into the Mega Society (1 per million requirement) when the latter was formed in 1982. The names of Chris Harding's various societies (606, 501, 401) are derived from the various admissions requirement: the minimum rarity level for 401 is one in ten to the fourth, for 606 is six in ten to the sixth, etc.

Evidently, the name "606 Society" caused some heartburn. "Formula 606" refers to an early, pre-penicillin cure for syphilis based on a compound of arsenic, as indicated in the classic 1940 movie, "Dr. Erlich's Magic Bullet," which is a bio-drama about the inventor of this cure starring Edward G. Robinson. Thus the 606 Society seems to suggest that the members are people who were cured of syphilis using Formula 606!

The Mega Society (1 out of 1,000,000)

The Mega Society was founded in 1982 by Ronald Hoefflin. The society was initially set up as an experiment to see if a society with a one-in-a-million requirement could be achieved. Neither Christopher Harding nor Kevin Langdon thought such a high entrance requirement psychometrically feasible; nevertheless Harding agreed to supplement the Mega Society with members of his 606 Society (a 6-per-million group), and Langdon allowed Hoefflin to use his list of the highest LAIT scorers, to help Hoefflin get his society off the ground. Hoefflin occupied the position of Administrator.

Unsurprisingly, the Mega Society's formation did not happen without conflict. As Hoeflin tells it, Kevin Langdon resented Hoeflin's "upstaging" of his Four Sigma Society, and started a campaign to undermine the society's status as a one-in-a-million society. Kevin wonders why Ron would take this position after accepting Kevin's help in founding the society in the first place! What Kevin did question was Ron's norming of the Mega and Titan Tests, which placed the ceiling at 190+. He has written that there is evidence that the ceilings of Ron Hoeflin's tests are no higher than 180, such that the society's requirement on these tests (43 right) is less than the one-in-a-million level. Ron has rebutted Kevin's claims, but neither has ceded his position.

In the society's journal, Megarian (issue #6, Oct 1982), Johannes Veldhuis, Mega's Recruitment Officer, proposed that three test scores combined according to a certain formula³, be required for admission in the future and that, as only five of Mega's 18 members at the time met this new criterion, the remainder of the membership be relegated to "honorary" status. The rationale for this proposal was the need to substantiate the claim of the Mega Society's one-in-a-million admission criterion for listings in the Guinness Book of World Records and the Book of Lists. In Megarian #11, Hoeflin proposed a set of rules under which the Mega Test would be the only exception to the three-test rule and Hoeflin would have exclusive executive power in the society. A vote was taken of the Mega membership, and Marilyn vos Savant announced the results in Megarian #15. The members overwhelmingly supported an undifferentiated membership list. In Megarian #21 (June 1984), acceptance of a set of bylaws establishing democratic procedures, written by Dave Garvey, was announced. In the same issue, Hoeflin proposed that the Mega Test become the sole basis for admission to the society except in borderline cases, where supplemental tests could be used. He also proposed that "The founder of the Mega Society shall be granted sole discretion in all future admission decisions..."

Hoeflin sent a referendum ballot to members of the society in October 1985 which called for setting aside the bylaws, demoting most of the members of the society to the "Savant Society" with a lower percentile cutoff, and creating open-ended terms of office for officers. He threatened to resign if his proposals were not adopted and did so when they were rejected by the membership.

In 1986, Hoeflin tried his hand again at founding a one-in-a-million society with the establishment of the Titan Society, for those who had scored 43 or higher on the Mega Test—the admission criterion was now

³ The method, called the Ferguson formula, after George A. Ferguson, a

□ well-known psychometrician, involves estimating the 'true' I.Q. that would be required to achieve high scores on imperfectly-correlated tests, which is generally higher than the average of the scores on the tests used.

quite clear. It was subsequently also called the Hoeflin Research Group and the Noetic Society, but when the sixth norming of the Mega Test put the one-in-a-million level at just under 43, it finally became known as the One-in-a-Million Society [Note: Hoeflin reverses the order of the Noetic Society and the One-in-a-Million Society in a later recollection of the events of that decade]. In 1991, at the suggestion of either Jeff Ward or Chris Cole, the One-in-a-Million society/Noetic Society was amalgamated with the Mega Society.

Ellen Graham, in her article for the Wall Street Journal, April 9, 1992, wrote: "When the Mega Society recently decided to merge with another IQ group, some members were told they might have to requalify for the new society." This idea was suggested against the better judgment of Hoeflin. An uproar ensued. Christopher Harding said that the proposal "shows some animals to be more equal than others," and he decried the "orgy of bloodletting." The retest was rescinded. The newly merged society kept "Mega" as its name, but dropped The Megarian in favor of Noesis, which had been the name of the journal of the One-in-a-Million Society.

The latest brouhaha at the Mega Society emerged recently over admission requirements. As reported in the Wall Street Journal, May 14, 1997 issue, when Paul Maxim of New York City tried to join the Mega Society, he produced scores he had achieved on standard intelligence tests. He was refused admission on the basis of these scores. The tests Mr. Maxim took are not claimed by their authors to discriminate anywhere near the one-in-a-million level. Moreover, the society is interested in selecting those earning high scores on adult tests, while Mr. Maxim's test scores were obtained in childhood. And, the society says, the Mega membership voted to accept 43 on the Mega and 173 on the LAIT as the society's sole admission criteria. Acceptance of any other test, or changing either of the qualifying scores currently accepted, would take another vote of the membership. Mr. Maxim, however, refused to take one of the Mega Society's unsupervised tests. Mr. Maxim looked at the Mega Society's tests, and says he found them "psychometrically invalid" because they are not standardized, not timed, and not sanctioned by the American Psychological Association. He contacted the Medical Board of California, where Mr. Langdon lives, and complained that an unlicensed "cult of intelligence" was operating in the state, and specifically that Kevin's mail-order I.Q.-testing business constitutes practicing psychology without a license. Kevin agreed to suspend his mail-order testing operation while he evaluated his legal options. He says that the requirement for a psychology license to "construct, administer, and interpret" intelligence tests is legally questionable.

The LAIT and the Mega Test are, in fact, standardized, on quite respectable samples. Both Langdon and Hoeflin note that a number of the standard tests are untimed, such as the Terman Concept Mastery and (often) the Raven Advanced Progressive Matrices. Psychological research is not, in general, submitted to the APA to be "sanctioned." The only sanction that counts is

the opinion of competent authorities in the field. According to Kevin, Dr. Cattell and Dr. Jensen regard his work as a valuable contribution to the study of human intelligence. Hoeflin further argues that adopting California's ruling nationwide would effectively and unconstitutionally ban freedom of assembly and speech as it applies to the formation and maintenance of the high IQ groups.

Prometheus Society (1 out of 30,000)

Originally called the Xenophon Society, The Prometheus Society was founded by Ronald Hoeflin in 1982, the same year as his founding of the Mega Society. The group was conceived of as a pool of people with very high I.Q.s that Hoeflin could consult to take various forms of his tests for the purpose of psychometric research. The society also provided an alternative to Kevin Langdon's Four Sigma Society; Hoeflin launched Prometheus after it became clear that Four Sigma was really dormant.

Exa Society (1 out of 1,000,000,000,000)

The Exa Society is a name suggested by Richard May in the August 1983 issue of Vidya, the journal of the Triple Nine Society, as a society that would accept only one entity per 10-to-the-15th power, meant as a parody of the "Mega" Society's name.⁴ In the same article, Richard May suggested the "Plus Sigma Society," meant as a parody of the Four Sigma Society, whose admission level being flexible, would be defined as always one sigma or standard deviation higher than the next highest high-IQ society's admission standard.

The Cinque (5 smartest people in the world)

The Cinque is a name proposed by Ronald Hoeflin in a letter to Johannes Veldhuis [former Mega Society membership officer] in the mid-1980's, to consist of the 5 smartest people in the world, and whenever a smarter person came along, one of the members of The Cinque would be bumped into an "emeritus" status. Johannes informed Hoeflin that "The Cinque" had been the name of some murderous secret society, so Hoeflin dropped the idea.

The Aleph-(3) Society (transfinite admissions requirement)

The Aleph-(3) Society is a name suggested by Richard May in the October 1986 issue of Vidya for the world's first high-IQ society with a

⁴ Note: the 1985 edition of the Guinness Book of Records (which is the international version of the Guinness Book of World Records), on page 85, gives "exa-" to mean 10-to-the-18th power.

transfinite admissions requirement. May wrote that "the entity commonly referred to as 'god' is only at the aleph-(1) level, according to the scale of the precise quantification of divinity."

"The Aleph" is May's ultimate achievement in the realm of naming ultra-high-IQ societies. Hoefflin [the source of this material] assumes that this name refers to "the set of all sets," which Cantor showed to be a logical impossibility. In his October 1986 article, May says that some have described this society as "analogous to a sort of cosmic Klein bottle, having neither 'inside' nor 'outside', which would be too parochial a burden," and May concludes that this society does not accept "unnormed, unrecognized, and non-'g'-saturated tests, such as the somewhat obscure Klein-Bottle Test [an allusion to Ed Cyr's "Mobius Test"], which is allegedly so easily confused with other tests, as proof of qualification, or as a 'backup' for a spurious Ripley's [Believe It Or Not] listing. Such is the austere rigor of the Aleph."

Geniuses of Distinction Society (G.O.D.S.) (1 out of 250 to 1 out of 100,000)

GODS was founded sometime in the 80's by Anton Montalban-Anderssen, and has claimed minimum requirements ranging from the 99.6 to 99.999 percentile. The society is listed in the Encyclopedia of Associations but accepts no new members, according to Anton, and apparently has never published a journal.

Cincinnatus Society (1 out of 1,000)

Cincinnatus was founded by Grady Ward in 1987 at the 99.9 percentile during a bitter dispute in the Triple Nine Society. Grady Ward declared himself Dictator, which some found preferable to the chaos in TNS. Apparently defunct since about 1989. It seems Grady faked his own death (there was a death notice in the "Mensa Bulletin"), but has become well-known in Internet free speech advocacy circles for his opposition to the Church of Scientology.

Minerva Society (1 out of 1,000)

Founded in 1987 by Kevin Langdon, Fred Britton, Jalon Leach, and Richard Weatherwax at the 99.9 percentile. Minerva was founded in response to the same dispute in TNS that led to the founding of Cincinnatus. In 1992, Minerva sought to be amalgamated with the Triple Nine Society, but the talks collapsed. Minerva accepted a variety of tests, including Kevin Langdon's "Polymath Intellectual Ability Scale," published in Games magazine in 1987.

Camelopard, The Giraffe Society (1 out of 50)

Camelopard was founded in 1988 by Lendon Best as a society for San Diego

Mensans who were tired of paying Mensa's high dues. Camelopard offered much lower dues. The society's growth rate has slowed, but it has acquired enough new members to avoid declining and maybe to grow a little. Most of the members now do not live in the San Diego area. There is a story here behind the giraffe (which was set up in opposition to a big owl), but I don't know what it is.

The Omega Society (1 out of 3,000,000)

Included Chris Harding as a member, who says he was not the founder. Kevin Langdon, who was also a member, says he received a membership card and a thin newsletter from Chris. Existed from about 1987 to 1989, and is now apparently defunct.

The Top One Percent Society (1 out of 100)

TOPS was founded by Ronald Hoeflin soon after he was fired as Editor of Vidya (journal of the Triple Nine Society). Since editing a high-IQ journal proved to be the most enjoyable job Hoeflin ever had, except for the low pay, he decided to start a new society in 1989 that he hoped would be large enough to yield a decent income. The Top One Percent Society's admission criterion was chosen to provide a large enough pool of people to make a job as editor of the journal feasible, yet still keep the intellectual quality of the discussions at a relatively high level. To avoid the types of disputes seen in the other groups, Hoeflin made himself sole officer as well as the editor of the journal.

The International Savant Society (No specific requirement)

This society was announced in an issue of the Mensa Bulletin sometime in the late 1980's, had a nice-looking introductory leaflet, had no specific IQ requirement, and was mostly looking for high achievers. Status is unknown.

The Cleo Society

The Cleo Society was founded in 1990 by ISPE Director of Admissions Clint Williams as a parody of the High-IQ groups. He named it after a cat belonging to [then] ISPE president Betty Hansen. He used the ISPE membership roster to advertise for his society, which violated a rule of the ISPE's charter against commercial use of the roster. According to an ISPE representative, the Board of Trustees which voted to expel Mr. Williams didn't realize that Cleo was meant as a mock society. This assertion seems disingenuous to me—it seems obvious to me that at least Mrs. Hansen should have realized this. In any case the Board expelled Mr. Williams without a hearing and no notice prior to the vote, and later made an announcement in Telicom, the ISPE's journal. ISPE's Legal Officer and Vice-President John Kormes took an active role in these proceedings. Later, when Mr. Kormes was himself expelled by the same procedure, he filed

suit and claimed wrongful expulsion. The judge in the case ruled against him, saying that although Mr. Kormes was entitled to a hearing under the ISPE's charter, since Mr. Kormes had approved of and participated in Mr.

Williams's expulsion he had no cause to complain about his own expulsion, which followed the same procedure. Since Mr. Kormes's lawsuit cost quite a bit of money, the charter was amended in 1994 to bar from membership any person who brought a lawsuit against the ISPE.

A criticism made of ISPE was that their expulsion procedure appeared to be arbitrary and rather autocratic. In fact, at the time, there was no explicit procedure written into the charter to define the expulsion of a member—an unfortunate circumstance that has been the source of long-standing animosity between the ISPE officers and former members. I understand that procedures have been defined for removing officers, Trustees, and the President from their positions; however, I'm not sure if expulsion procedures from the Society have been defined.

According to the ISPE representative, after it came to light that the Cleo Society was in fact a parody, Mr. Williams was reinstated into ISPE.

According to others, it was well known what the Cleo Society was about—Mr. Williams was reinstated after professing contrition.

The International High Five Society (1 out of 20)

The High Five is open to anyone testing above the 95th percentile on a standardized test of intelligence. Founded in 1991. This group is defunct.

The One-in-a-Thousand Society (1 out of 1,000)

Founded in July, 1992 by Ronald Hoeflin. Hoeflin wrote in issue 1 of Oath that his "main purpose in founding the society [was] to put out more than two issues of a journal per month [at that time, In-Genius, the journal of the Top One Percent Society was on a twice-per-month schedule] without putting an additional financial burden on those TOPS members who cannot afford it. The purpose of OATHS, like that of TOPS, is the exchange of ideas on a wide range of topics by intelligent people." Hoeflin is sole officer of this society, in an arrangement similar to TOPS.

The IQuadrivium Society (1 out of 1,000)

Founded in 1994 by Karyn S. Hunting. Open to individuals who score in the 99.9th percentile on a standardized adult intelligence test. Karyn relates the history of her society quite well at her IQuadrivium page. Trivia question: what is the etymology of the society's name?

Energieia Society (Admissions requirement unknown)

Energieia is a society for intelligent Christians, principally made up of Christians from other high IQ societies. Dr Richard Kirby and Ted Bell are co-founders.

The Giga Society (1 out of 1,000,000,000)

No, it's not a joke, or maybe it is, I'm not too sure. Both the name of the society and its journal (Nemesis) appear to be poking fun at the Mega Society (whose journal name is Noesis). Also, it's hard for me to believe a society with such a strict requirement could ever get off the ground (assuming the world population is 6 billion, only 6 people could qualify). But if it is possible, Paul Cooijmans of the Netherlands can claim credit. Paul says the main goal of the Giga Society is "to honor the efforts of the very highest scorers, who are of great importance to the development of ultra-high-ceiling tests for mental abilities. A secondary goal is to make members of other IQ societies realize they're not all that, although they may think they are." Paul founded this unlikely society in 1996 and has created an admissions test called the "Test for Genius" (TFG, short and long form). The short form is a 42-item test (it used to have 45 items, but Paul has discarded 3 problems). The current norming of the short form (3rd) is based on 38 answer sheets, and places the one-in-a-billion level at about 35 correct out of 42. So far, the highest score on this test has been 28 correct, so it may take a while before somebody qualifies for the Giga Society based upon a TFG score. By the way, Paul estimates the ceiling of his test to be at an astronomical one-in-100 billion (which would identify the smartest person who ever lived). The only member of the Giga got in because he gave himself a founder's exemption.

The Glia Society (1 out of 1,000)

The Glia Society was founded in 1997 by Paul Cooijmans. The main goal of the society is to provide a forum for communication between highly intelligent individuals. The entrance requirement is 3.125 standard deviations above the mean (150 IQ for tests that have 16 IQ points per sigma) on "wide range" tests which contain visual-spatial, verbal, and numeric problems, while it is around 160 IQ on "one-sided" tests. So far, the Glia Society has three members including the founder (as of July, 1997)

Praesum Mentis Genius Continuum (1 out of 33, plus creative achievement)

Similar in principle to the International Heuristic Association, the admission requirements to this society are twofold: a score on a standardized IQ test at or above the 97th percentile, plus "the applicant

must have generated a significant body of work in their area of expertise, skill or talent that is demonstrably unique and revolutionary in nature." I don't know who the founder of this group is, nor the founding date. But they do have a website with a contact for those who are interested.

Change History:

- 9/4/97 Cleo Society section is worded more strongly against the official ISPE version.
- 9/4/97 Removed criticism of Triple Nine's journal publication schedule. The schedule seems to be highly dependent upon the particular Editor at the time.
- 9/4/97 Moved paragraphs on Ron's Editorship of Vidya from the TOPS section to the TNS section. Modified these paragraphs based upon input from Kevin Langdon.
- 9/4/97 Added information to the Minerva Society.
- 9/4/97 Added information to the Cincinnatus Society.
- 9/4/97 The Mega Society story now has input from Kevin Langdon, and is contrasted with Ron Hoeflin's version.
- 9/4/97 Deleted Joe O'Rourke as a founding member of the Triple Nine Society—again. I believe it is finally correct!
- 9/4/97 The ISPE section continues to become more unflattering.
- 9/4/97 The MM society's actual admission requirement was at the 99th percentile.
- 7/26/97 Added comments made by Co-founder of Mensa spoken on Mensa's 50th anniversary.
- 7/16/97 Added information about Energeia.
- 7/16/97 Make a note of Triple Nine's leisurely publication schedule, which more than one person has complained of.
- 7/16/97 Put back in the speculative reason for ISPE's non-acceptance of Hoeflin's Mega Test as a footnote. Having had a chance to correspond with participants from both sides of the fence, I make my own judgment of what actually happened.
- 7/16/97 Corrected the admission requirement listed for the Exa Society. It should be one-in-1,000,000,000,000,000, substantially tighter than a one-in-1,000,000,000 requirement!
- 7/16/97 Give less credit to Harding and Langdon in the founding of the Mega Society.
- 7/16/97 Added origin of Chris Harding's various "numerical" groups (401, 501, 606 Societies). Also added a source of criticism directed at the name of the 606 Society.
- 7/16/97 Added Joe O'Rourke as a founding member of the Triple Nine Society.
- 7/6/97 Added section on the Praesum Mentis Genius Continuum.
- 6/30/97 Broke out a separate section to talk about the Cleo Society.
- 6/29/97 The idea that former ISPE president Betty Hansen could be granted

surreptitious editorial control of Vidya, the journal of the Triple Nine Society, through Clint Williams seems far-fetched to me. I have removed this portion from ISPE's history.

6/29/97 Removed the speculation that ISPE doesn't accept the Mega Test or the LAIT out of animosity towards the authors. The practice of using only psychologist-approved tests, notwithstanding the validity of the tests themselves, at least has the merit of circumventing problems such as the Mega Society has had with Paul Maxim.