

# Noesis

The Journal of the Hoeflin Research Group  
(Issue 35, February 1989)

## Editorial

Ronald K. Hoeflin  
P.O. Box 7430  
New York, NY 10116

U.S. News & World Report Article: There is scheduled to be an article on John H. Sununu in U.S. News & World Report the week of February 27 through March 5 that will mention his high score on the Mega Test and include seven sample problems from the test as well as my address (above) where copies of the test may be obtained.

New York Magazine Article: An article about Marilyn vos Savant and her husband Robert Jarvik appeared in New York Magazine in its issue dated February 6, 1989. The price of the issue was \$1.95. I don't know if you can order back issues, but if you want to try, the address is Joseph Oliver, New York Magazine, Subscription Department, Box 54661, Boulder, CO 80322-4661, or you can try the publisher; News America Publishing Inc., 755 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017-5998. If you cannot obtain the issue from either of these sources or from a library, I will send you a photocopy upon request. Please send me \$5.00 to cover costs of photocopying and postage. It is a fairly long article. Marilyn said that she found the tone of the interview turning somewhat negative midway through and that she would never give another interview, but I am told that she and her husband did appear on a morning network television show for Valentine's Day, so I guess her swearing off of interviews lasted only a week or so, unless the interview was pre-recorded.

Mort Downey Jr. Television Show: Rick Rosner, who tied Sununu on my mega Test, as reported in the January 1986 issue of Omni, and Kevin Langdon, who is the author of several high-ceiling intelligence tests and founder of several high-IQ societies, taped an appearance on the Mort Downey Jr. television show, which is syndicated nationwide, on the pros and cons of intelligence testing. I was invited to be on the show but declined because it tends to present issues emotionally rather than rationally and because I am fairly shy even in optimum circumstances (except when writing letters).

Super Tests: I am interested in editing a book titled Super Tests that would consist of challenging intellectual tests designed by members of the various high-IQ societies, including this one. If you have any puzzle collections you would like me to consider for inclusion in such a book, please send me a copy. Also indicate whether the answers to your problems would appear in the book or whether you would prefer to score the test for a fee. It may not be easy to locate a publisher for such a book, particularly if half the tests will be scored for an additional fee, but I will try.

Last Month's word Quiz: All of the words mentioned in last month's issue of Noesis--jillion, spaghetti Western, hunky-dory, jeepers creepers, and beaver (meaning the female pudenda)--do appear in Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary. Richard may sent a rather cunning comment, hoping that H&G members are "cunning linguists" and do not find my reference to the word beaver "in bad taste."

Publication of "Noesis": Richard May and Eric Branson have each tentatively offered to edit Noesis after I have put out the 36th issue. I'm not sure that either of them would be willing or able to put out a monthly issue. Perhaps if they alternated month by month it would not be too much of a strain for each of them to put out 6 issues per year, giving you 12 issues per year in all. Chris Cole wrote to say: "I am upset about the prospects of Noesis becoming quarterly. I would like to extend a challenge to all H&G members to put together six pages on one subject to be published in Noesis. C. M. Langan and Eric Hart have both complained in the past about lack of space. Let them put their 'money' where their mouth is." Actually, Noesis could probably use articles of up to seven pages, with one page left over for editorial notes.

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ASSOCIATIONS, 23rd Edition - 1989

★8812★ GENIUSES OF DISTINCTION SOCIETY (Gifted) (GODS)  
P.O. Box 101 Phone (313) 862-6125  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303 R. Anton Montaban-Anderssen, Sec.  
Founded: 1985. Members: 21. Staff: 1. Persons classified as geniuses whose IQs fall in the 99.999th percentile (one in 100,000) and have distinguished themselves in at least one field. Seeks to identify geniuses and provide fellowship. Maintains hall of fame for those who have proven distinctive in a specialized field. Publications: (1) Journal of Mercury, periodic; (2) Directory (phone book), periodic. Affiliated With: Mega Society.

★8813★ INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY (Gifted) (ISPE)  
c/o Robert D. Russell Phone: (317) 843-0706  
304 Lexington Blvd. Robert D. Russell, Pres.  
Carmel, IN 46032  
Founded: 1974. Members: 447. Budget: Less than \$25,000 Regional Groups: 1. Persons representing 21 countries ranked in the top one-tenth of one percentile of intellect, as determined by standardized adult intelligence and linguistic ability tests. Helps members enrich their range of education and experience in an environment of intellectual research, accomplishment, and high achievement. Members progress through various levels within the organization based on achievements and at higher levels, on original contributions to society. Conducts specialized education and research programs, creates ad hoc committees to examine special philosophical and ethical issues. Presents awards including accreditation for titles achieved and worldwide publicity for recipients. Maintains small library and biographical archives. Bestows awards. Computerized Services: Mailing list. Telecommunications Services: Easylink, 62805505. Committees: Design of Awards and Certificates, Mentor Institute. Publications: (1) Telicom (Journal of Proceedings), 10/year; (2) Membership Roster, semiannual; (3) History of the ISPE (updated periodically), also publishes Statement of Policy and brochures. Formerly: (1975) Thousand Convention/Meeting: monthly - always Annandale, VA.

★8814★ INTERTEL (Gifted)  
P.O. Box 150580 Phone: (303) 797-7210  
Lakewood, CO 80215 Jacqueline Matthews, Exec. Dir.  
Founded: 1966. Members: 2000. Budget: \$52,000. Regional Groups: 12. Individuals who have proven to have an intelligence quotient at or above the 99th percentile on an accepted test (INTERTEL is an acronym for International Legion of Intelligence.) Encourages a meaningful and lasting intellectual fellowship, fosters an exchange of ideas on any and all subjects; assists in research relating to high intelligence. Bestows annual Hollingworth Award to project furthering the cause of gifted children. Committees: Intellect Acceptance. Publications: (1) Integra (journal), monthly; (2) Membership List, annual. Convention/Meeting: annual - always second weekend in July 1989 July 14-16, Indianapolis, IN, 1990 July 13-15, Tulsa, OK.

★8815★ MEGA SOCIETY (Gifted) (MS)  
13155 Wimberly Sq., #284 Phone: (619) 679-0273  
San Diego, CA 92128 Jeff Ward, Exec. Officer  
Founded: 1982. Members: 30. Budget: Less than \$25,000. Individuals who have proven by test to have an intelligence quotient higher than that of 99.9999% of the general population. Works to provide a forum for individuals of extremely high intellectual ability, to increase knowledge about these intelligence levels. Publishes journal of papers submitted by members on various subjects. Derives its name from the prefix mega-, meaning million. Theoretically, on any given test or combination of tests accepted for admission purposes by the society, only one person in one million can qualify for membership. Publications: Megaron (membership directory included in issues #regularly), 6/year. Supersedes: 501 Society, 606 Society. Convention/Meeting: None.

**\*8816\* MENSA (Gifted)**

2626 E 14th St  
Brooklyn, NY 11235

Phone (718) 934-3700

Margot Seitelman, Exec. Dir.

Founded: 1960 Members: 53 000 Local Groups: 144. "Persons who have established, by a score on a standard intelligence test, that their intelligence is higher than that of 98 percent of the population," special interest groups (200). Seeks to identify and foster human intelligence and to provide a stimulating intellectual and social environment for its members. Mensa's non-profit Mensa Education and Research Foundation encourages and supports research in the social and psychological sciences, especially projects that concern the intellectually gifted. Promotes communication among members. Awards scholarships to students enrolled in degree-granting programs at accredited American colleges, based on a competitive essay. Sponsors Sacred Cow Special Interest Group, which provides a forum for debating "undebatable" issues. Provides speakers. Publications: (1) Interior, 10/year; (2) Mensa Bulletin/International Journal, 10/year; (3) Mensa Research Journal, 3/year; (4) Membership List, annual; (5) Register, biennial; also offers bibliographies, children's pen pal exchange, and tapes; special interest groups (SIGs) publish newsletters. Also Known As: American MENSA Convention/Meeting: annual - 1989 June 28-July 4, Atlanta, GA.

**\*8817\* PROMETHEUS SOCIETY (Gifted) (PS)**

P.O. Box 570873  
Houston, TX 77257

Phone: (713) 977-5010

Patrick Hill, Editor & Act. Pres.

Founded: 1983 Members: 120. Budget: Less than \$25,000. Persons exceeding the 99.997th percentile of general intelligence. Conducts research; provides for the exchange of ideas and opinions. Membership aids the society in identifying the norms for high ability intelligence tests. Publications: Gift of Fire, 8-10/year. Formed By Merger Of: Titan Society and Xenophon Society.

**\*8818\* SINISTRAL SIG (Gifted) (SS)**

200 Emmett Ave.  
Derby, CT 06418

Phone: (203) 735-1759

Shariene McEvoy, Coordinator

Founded: 1977 Members: 100. Budget: Less than \$25,000. Left-handed people whose IQs are in the top two percent of the population and who are eligible to be members of Mensa (see separate entry). Purpose is to act as a channel for information about the relationship between left-handedness and intelligence and brain function. Conducts surveys and experiments concerning left-handedness and its relationship to intelligence. Publications: Sinistralian, bimonthly. Convention/Meeting: None.

**\*8819\* TITAN SOCIETY (Gifted) (TS)**

P.O. Box 7430  
New York, NY 10116

Ronald K. Hoeflin, Founder & Editor

Founded: 1986 Members: 16. Individuals who score 42 or higher on the 48-point Mega Test, a self-administered intelligence test for adults. Provides members with the opportunity to contact others who have a similar level of intelligence. Plans to hold meetings. Publications: Noesis (journal), monthly. Formerly: (1987) Noetic Society.

**\*8820\* TRIPLE NINE SOCIETY (Gifted) (999)**

P.O. Box 1111  
Madisonville, KY 42431

Phone: (812) 867-6713

Barry Kington, Membership Officer

Founded: 1978 Members: 600. Budget: Less than \$25,000. Regional Groups: 7. Individuals who can produce certified evidence of a score in the 99.9th percentile on specific standardized intelligence tests. Promotes free exchange of ideas among persons of proven high intelligence. Fosters development of an intellectual community based on inquiry into broad rather than narrow fields of knowledge. Compiles statistics, offers placement services. Computerized Services: Data base of members. Committees: Gifted Children, Psychometrics. Publications: (1) Vidya (Sanskrit word meaning knowledge), monthly; (2) Directory, annual. Convention/Meeting: annual - 1988 October, Denver, CO.

# Mathematicians Link Knot Theory to Physics

By GINA KOLATA

**M**ATHEMATICIANS and physicists have discovered that a major tool in knot theory, a branch of mathematics, applies as well to elementary particle physics.

The researchers say that the connection was unexpected because particle physics seemed far removed from knot theory, a branch of topology, the study of the properties of space and shapes.

They said the discovery might help knot theorists generalize their findings to strange mathematical spaces other than ordinary three-dimensional space and might lead to new insights in elementary particle physics.

## An 'Exciting' Advance

The newly discovered link with knot theory "is easily one of the most exciting things I've had the privilege of working on," said Edward Witten, a particle physicist at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton.

Mathematicians say that two knots are the same if one can be converted into another without cutting the string. For a hundred years, mathematicians have been making vast tables of knots. Until molecular biologists discovered that knot theory could help them understand how DNA, the genetic material, is twisted and knotted inside cells, knot theory had no practical applications.

But no one was satisfied with the knot tables. What mathematicians really wanted was a formula that would describe the knots, or compare them to see if they could be transformed into each other without cutting the string.

A few years ago, almost by accident, Vaughn Jones, a knot theorist and topologist at the University of California at Berkeley, found a polynomial equation that could be used to tell knots apart. The form of the

Jones polynomial is the same for all knots but the values of the equation differ with different knots. If two knots are different, their Jones polynomials will be different.

Last July, Michael Atiyah, a mathematician at Oxford University in England, startled mathematicians and physicists by asserting that the mathematics of the Jones polynomial is exactly the mathematics of elementary particle physics.

"It was really Atiyah who visualized what was going on," Dr. Witten said. He said Dr. Atiyah suggested that the Jones polynomial describes interactions between subatomic particles, just like quantum gauge theory, a theory of elementary particle physics.

"It was a very provocative suggestion," Dr. Witten said. "I thought about it for a long time and I realized that Atiyah's suggestion was actually correct."

Dr. Jones said that the physics connections are also enhancing knot theory. Previously, he said, the Jones polynomial only worked for knots in ordinary three-dimensional space. In order to calculate a Jones polynomial for a knot, mathematicians first had to look at its shadow as it is projected onto a flat plane. But mathematicians also study other spaces, with additional dimensions and with strange twists and turns in the spaces themselves. Projections were useless for such spaces.

But the language used in quantum gauge theory is independent of ordinary three-dimensional space and allows mathematicians to calculate Jones polynomials for knots in other spaces.

Even better, Dr. Jones said, Dr. Witten's findings mean that the knot theory results can apply even when there is no knot at all. The space itself can be twisted, Dr. Jones said, and mathematicians can now calculate Jones polynomials to see if the twists in two spaces are different.

# THIS TEEN'S GOT IT FIGURED

*Math whiz has pick  
of U.S. colleges*

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — As thousands of American teenagers struggle with the complexities of basic algebra, a 17-year-old English girl is being wooed as a lecturer by Harvard.

Ruth J. Lawrence also would pursue her mathematical research on such subjects as quantum groups and statistical mechanics.

The teenager from Oxford, England, is manipulating some of the most complex concepts in mathematics.

Her work has taken her to the outer fringes of theoretical physics and mathematics, including such subjects as knot and string theory, and the connections between the world of particle physics and mathematics.

She entered Oxford University six years ago and, by age 13, had her degree.

Today, she is working on her doctorate and has long since caught the attention of the world's top mathematicians.

Lawrence already has taught



**RUTH J. LAWRENCE**  
*Earned Oxford degree at 13.*

students at Oxford on a tutorial basis.

If she accepts a position at an American university, it will be mainly to conduct research. But she said she might lead a seminar or deliver an occasional lecture.

In addition to Harvard, Berke-

ley in California wants her services, and Princeton's Institute for Advance Study is interested in bringing her in for a year.

Far from some exclusive British school, Lawrence's successes began in her own home in Oxford, where her father, Harry, a computer consultant, gave Ruth her entire pre-Oxford education.

"I was always dealing with adults, so when I got to Oxford I fit into the atmosphere . . . He didn't use any textbooks. He taught me totally himself," she

said yesterday while visiting Harvard with her father.

Lawrence got top scores on her Oxford entrance exam. It was at that point, her father said, "it was obvious to me that she was a little better than most."

Asked if she feels she has missed out on childhood she answers: "I've had a very enjoyable childhood. I've had so many opportunities I wouldn't have had if I'd gone the ordinary route."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1989

# The Usual Gallows Chatter

Russell Baker

**A**fter the Ayatollah Khomeini offered financial and spiritual incentives for the murder of Salman Rushdie, the press fell to with a will.

The first comment I read said it was just politics. It said factions in Iran were exploiting Mr. Rushdie's novel for internal political advantage.

Was this supposed to comfort Mr. Rushdie? Since almost everything in Iran is just politics, including its incessant hangings and shootings, there seemed little in it to cheer him, or, for that matter, little of anything that was new or interesting.

The next piece I read made no effort to comfort him either, but took a very stern tone toward me and everybody else here in this part of the world for not being more knowledgeable and sensitive to the Islamic religion.

This made me rather angry, because while I don't know terribly much about Islam, I know a good deal more about it than about any of the earth's other religions except Christianity and Greek and Roman paganism.

Anger, of course, made me temporarily forget Mr. Rushdie, just as the opportunity to scold his readers had made the author of this insulting and misinformed article forget that the issue in this case is not humanity's inevitable and enduring ignorance, but a fellow human under sentence of death without due process of law.

I then read several more pieces stating once again and at great length what I had long known; to wit, that the Islamic faith is much given to gentleness and kindness and has made many vital contributions to civilization.

Some of these pieces mentioned Mr. Rushdie disapprovingly, rather as a high-bred Christian evangelist of the 1920's might have injected his sermon with testy asides about the heathen H. L. Mencken.

It seemed curiouser and curiouser as the days passed that no one in all journalism wanted to come to grips with the agonizing plight of Mr. Rushdie.

This eerie capital sentence issued from Teheran, committing millions of God's devout worshipers to hunt

down and murder a lone human being, was surely an extraordinary development in the march of progress, yet it occasioned almost no response that was not utterly banal.

Each of the usual suspects used Mr. Rushdie's predicament as an occasion to round up the usual arguments for the usual causes.

Scholars of Islamic civilization seized the chance to lecture on Western ignorance of their speciality. Foreign-affairs diviners familiar with Iran delivered the usual explanations about radicals and moderates struggling for control of the revolution.

Defenders of the First Amendment deplored the Ayatollah's assault on publishing freedoms and denounced chain bookshop corporations and the Canadian Government for cowardice in stopping sales of the Rushdie novel.

This refreshed conservative commentators with new strength for the eternal struggle against liberals and leftists, or "the Western literary herd," as Patrick Buchanan called them while declaring that "the First Amendment has succeeded phony patriotism as the last refuge of the scoundrel."

To his credit, Mr. Buchanan at least acknowledged that Mr. Rushdie was in a terrible pickle and suggested a possible remedy: "Since he is so high on Danny the Red and so down on Mrs. Thatcher, maybe Sal will want

to fly down to Nicaragua and seek sanctuary there."

By this time I had seen several people abuse the Ayatollah on television by saying that he had condemned Mr. Rushdie without even reading "The Satanic Verses." Why do people say things like this? There has been nothing published to the effect that the Ayatollah didn't read the book.

And what if he didn't? Do we want to live in a world where we must actually read a book before pronouncing on it? Last year every other American you met expressed passionate opinions on Allan Bloom's "The Closing of the American Mind," a book so unreadable that it reminded me of Mark Twain's comment on The Book of Mormon: "chloroform in print."

The Rushdie story defeats journalism, I suspect, because it approaches science fiction. Mr. Rushdie's plight was foretold years ago in a Ray Bradbury story about a nightmare future in which manhunts had become live television entertainment, with vivid camera work bringing the agony of the hunted right into the parlor.

It was — and is — the old-fashioned public hanging adapted for the global village of television. Instead of a hundred in the village square, there are millions of us now, but while waiting for the entertainment we still pass the time with the usual chatter. □

NEWSDAY, MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 1989

# Humanities Push Falling Short?

Washington (AP) — A national push to have colleges return to traditional liberal arts curricula emphasizing humanities courses has translated into little success in the past five years, according to a study released yesterday.

The study, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, found that students are only slightly more likely to have to take courses in humanities to graduate — and it is possible to bypass many significant fields of knowledge en route to a degree.

General requirements in the humanities area rose an average of 1.5 hours from 1983-84 to 1988-89 — a 6.2 percent increase, according to the study of course requirements at 496 colleges and universities. By contrast, the study found, general requirements in mathematics and science rose by 11 percent.

"One would have hoped that all the concern about curriculum reform would have resulted in more" humanities requirements, endowment chairwoman Lynne Cheney said. "There's been such emphasis and such effort in the past five years to try to restore form and substance to undergraduate requirements."

The National Endowment for the Humanities has pushed for more required humanities curricula since 1984, when William Bennett, then-secretary of education and now top drug fighter for the Bush administration, published a report charging that many students were graduating without rudimentary knowledge of history, literature, art and philosophy.

New York educators expressed some surprise at the findings. Officials with the State University of New York system said they believed the requirements in humanities fields at SUNY campuses had gone

up substantially more than 1.5 hours.

"I would have thought it would be more across the country," said Joseph Burke, provost for the SUNY system. "That is certainly my impression of the situation at SUNY."

Burke also suggested that if the National Endowment for the Humanities looked further to see how many students were signing up now for humanities courses as electives, it would see a different picture.

"I think there is growing interest on the part of students in the humanities," Burke said. "I think sometimes we get very hung up on requirements as opposed to what students are actually taking." Jerry Schubel, provost of the SUNY campus at Stony Brook, said his college added new requirements in the humanities more than five years ago.

Currently, Cheney said, it is possible to earn a bachelor's degree from 38 percent of colleges and universities without taking any course in history; 45 percent without taking a course in English or American literature; 62 percent without taking a philosophy course, and 77 percent without studying a foreign language.

*Ford Fessenden contributed to this story.*

NEW YORK POST, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1989

## 50 tax-return pros don't add up

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fifty professional tax-return preparers came up with 50 different answers when asked to calculate the federal taxes of a hypothetical family, Money magazine reported yesterday.

The professionals' answers ranged from \$12,359 to \$35,813 — an even worse performance than a year ago.

The accountant who designed the test said the correct tax was \$23,393, but the law is so confusing that several correct answers were possible, Money said.