

T I T A N I A

The Journal of the Titan Society

(Issue #2, April 1986)

I have already heard from four of our prospective members, three of whom (Cole, Hart, and Vos Savant) joined. The fourth (Simon) disqualified himself for having obtained help on the test but offered financial support.

Two people have qualified for membership since the last newsletter:

Peter A. Pomfrit
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Peel Green, Eccles,
Manchester M30 7LR
England

Cedric Stratton
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On the following pages I present (1) some puzzles submitted by Chris Cole, (2) an autobiographical sketch by Eric Hart, and (3) a graph prepared by Professor Joe O'Rourke of Johns Hopkins University showing the scatter diagram of raw scores on my Mega Test vs. GRE scores that participants reported to me.

In the next issue I will include a new test designed by me consisting of 24 verbal analogies, 6 number series, and 6 spatial problems. The non-verbal problems will count 2 points apiece in order to receive equal weighting with the verbal problems, which will be counted 1 point apiece. There will be 5 or 6 other tests in this series eventually, culminating in a new mega-level test consisting of the entire series of tests or perhaps of only a selection of the best problems in the series. But since I am involved in typing the final draft of my doctoral dissertation, it may be a year or more before I can complete the other tests in this series.

Chris Cole has volunteered to serve as editor, and I may let him do so as soon as active membership reaches 10 or so. I will continue to send this newsletter to all qualified prospects at least until that goal is reached. At the moment we have 4 active members, counting myself.

I am told by Marilyn Mach vos Savant that as of now the Mega Society has not reached any final decisions about which persons who scored 42 or above on my Mega Test will be admitted as Mega members, if any.

If and when the membership of the Titan Society approaches 100, I will ask the top 10% of them if they would like to form a new mega-level group, based probably on the performances on my new series of tests.

Ronald K. Hoeflin, Editor
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New York, NY 10116

LOGIC PUZZLES

Chris Cole
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Labeled Boxes

Two boxes are labeled "A" and "B". A sign on box A says "The sign on box B is true and its gold is in box A." A sign on box B says "The sign on box A is false and the gold is in box A." Which box contains the gold?

N-Person Fair Division

If two people want to divide a pie but do not trust each other, they can still insure that each gets a fair share by using the technique that one person cuts and the other person chooses. Generalize this technique to more than two people. Take care to insure that no one can be cheated by a coalition of the others.

Sultan's Dowry

A sultan has granted a commoner a chance to marry one of his hundred daughters. The commoner will be presented the daughters one at a time. When a daughter is presented, the commoner will be told the daughter's dowry. The commoner has only one chance to accept or reject each daughter; he cannot return to a previously rejected daughter. The sultan's catch is that the commoner may only marry the daughter with the highest dowry. What is the commoner's best strategy, assuming he knows nothing about the distribution of dowries?

Newcomb's Paradox

A being put one thousand dollars in box A and either zero or one million dollars in box B and presents you with two choices:

- (1) Open box B only.
- (2) Open both box A and box B.

The being put money in box B only if it predicted you will choose option (1). The being put nothing in box B if it predicted you will do anything other than choose option (1), including choosing option (2), flipping a coin, etc. Assuming you have never known the being to be wrong in predicting your actions, which option should you choose to maximize the amount of money you get?

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eric Hart
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Miller Pl., NY 11764

Enclosed are the dozen or so first-class stamps you requested to help defray mailing expenses. I hope you meet your recruitment goal.

On my score booklet you penned a request for a brief autobiographical sketch. As it is unclear to me whether your first priority is research or curiosity, I'll try to balance my information.

I was raised in various small towns across the Rocky Mountain Northwest. Few records of intellectual precocity have survived apart from those of a maternal-anecdotal (and thus relatively unsubstantiated) character. The most remarkable of these involve a supposed capacity, at 8 months, to point out familiar objects and unambiguously give their correct names, and self-motivated autodidactic reading by around 4 years. It may be worth strassing that, beyond the age of five or six, most learning reinforcement was negative; that is, the liabilities of failure were exclusively attached to the developmental variable usually reserved for "nurture". Since earnings were sporadic, the family environment was generally too stressful and impoverished to afford much in the way of educational advantages. This void was not filled by the school system - owing, in part, to frequent relocation - and my patience with it was regrettably exhausted some years before highschool graduation. When, in college on an academic scholarship, I realized that I was still being given little except a timetable for reading I could more effectively select and pace for myself, I left. Accordingly, I have no degree in fact or ideal.

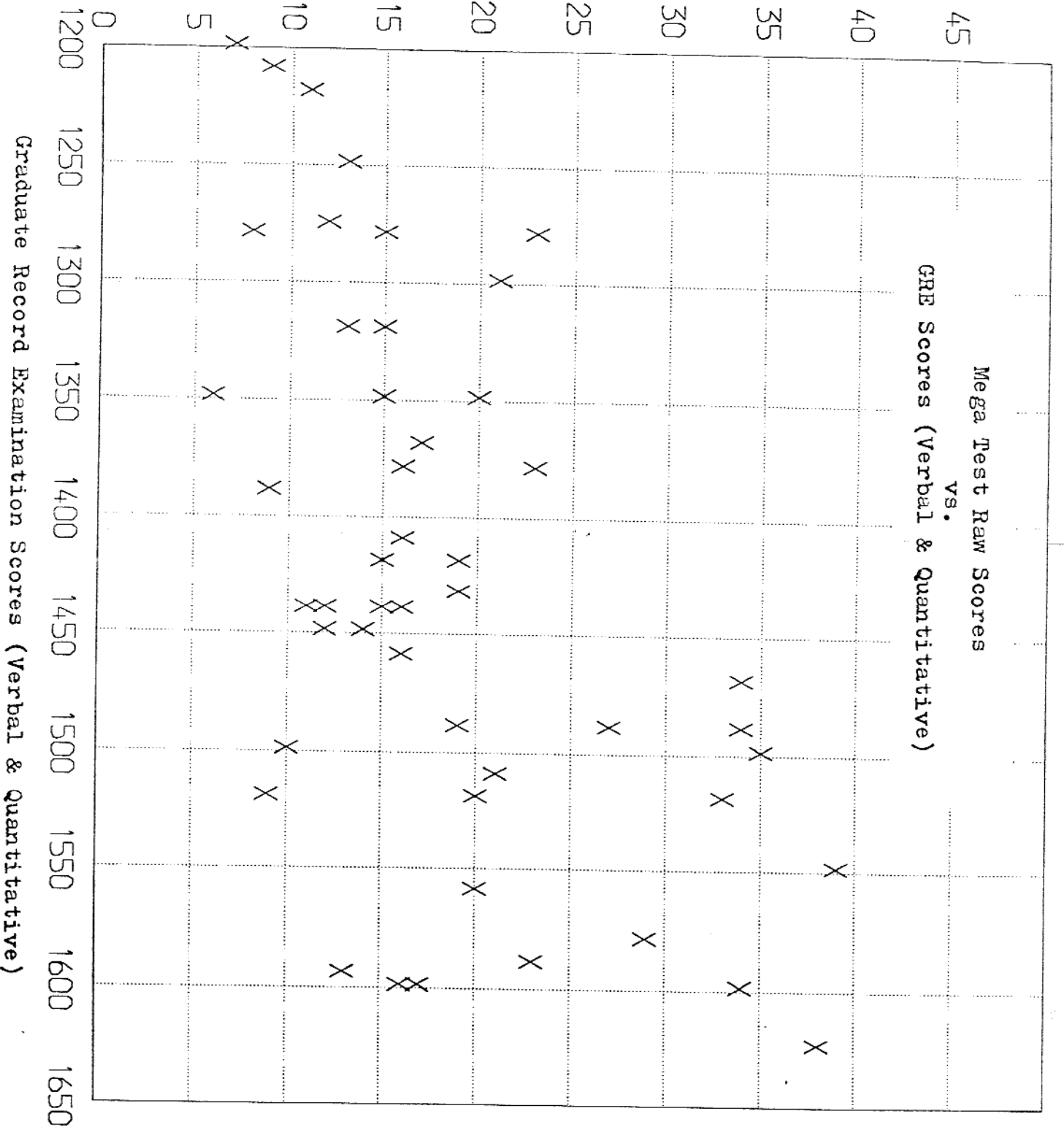
I have worked as a ranch hand, firefighter/forest ranger, carpenter, and most recently as "security" in some of Long Island's steamier discotheques and oceanside resorts. I cohabit with an unsolicited feline.

My current interests, while varied, center on higher logic and the theory of computability, specifically the study of (automated) algorithms. Those familiar with the topic may find it amusing that I disagree with the vast majority of theorists on the notorious $P = NP?$ question: I consider the answer to be a qualified affirmative, and have surprising (though strong and extensive) reasons for my opinion.

Best of luck with your plans for the society.

Eric Hart

Mega Test Raw Scores



Mega Test Raw Scores

