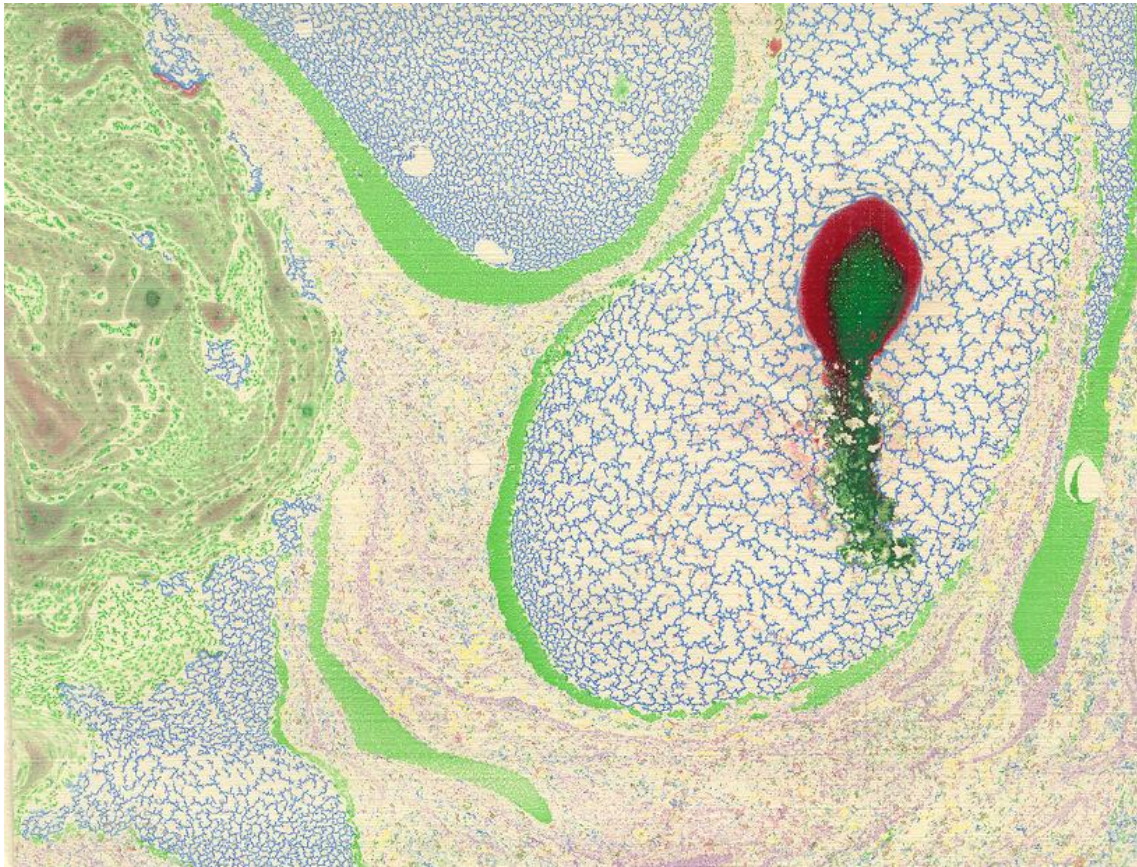




# Noesis

**The Journal of the Mega Society**

**Issue #185    November 2007**



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# Editorial

**Kevin Langdon**

Mega has two new members. Please welcome Brian Wiksell and Dany Provost.

We're overdue for the beginning of our yearly election cycle. Our Constitution prescribes a call for candidates for office in the September issue, but there was neither a September nor an October issue.

The offices are: Editor, Internet Officer, and Administrator (the Administrator performs functions performed by officers called "membership officers" and "treasurers" in other societies). We have the option of having more than one Editor. The method of voting for Editors will provide the opportunity to vote yes or no on each candidate. All who receive a majority of yes votes will become Editors and will publish issues of *Noesis* in rotation. (I would like to continue as an Editor, but I hope there's at least one more.)

Any member of the Mega Society may run for office. Please notify the Editor if you plan to run by the deadline for the next issue.

A Mega Society article has been recreated at:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mega\\_Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mega_Society)

This issue of *Noesis* features a memorial to long-time member Robert Dick, Ron Hoeflin's new QUANTA Test, an article on the population crisis by Andrew Beckwith (with the Editor), a short article on *Litton's Problematical Recreations* by Ron Yannone, the second installment of "Ask May-Tzu," a poem by May-Tzu, and the Editor's photo and description of a cat.

The deadline for *Noesis* #186 is December 28. The deadline for the *Journal of Right Tail Psychometrics* is again extended, to January 15; submissions are solicited. More *Noesis* submissions are also needed. Please think about writing something or send something from your files for publication. Both Mega-member and nonmember contributions are encouraged.

And please submit your questions for "Ask May-Tzu."

**Cover:** "Reticulated Surface Tension 6," by Jon Miles.  
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In the words of the artist: "[I]mages from my 1987 marble series—these were created using ink diluted with thinner floating on water and then cardstock dropped onto the surface to pick up an ink pattern. The pigments in the cobalt blue produced interesting dendritic patterns—very similar to dendritic pigment patterns in my right iris freckle . . ."

**Illustration, p. 18:** Untitled. Copyright © 2007 by Kevin Langdon. All rights reserved.

## About the Mega Society

The Mega Society was founded by Dr. Ronald K. Hoeflin in 1982. The 606 Society (6 in  $10^6$ ), founded by Christopher Harding, was incorporated into the new society and those with IQ scores on the Langdon Adult Intelligence Test (LAIT) of 173 or more were also invited to join. (The LAIT qualifying score was subsequently raised to 175; official scoring of the LAIT terminated at the end of 1993, after the test was compromised). A number of different tests were accepted by 606 and during the first few years of Mega's existence. Later, the LAIT and Dr. Hoeflin's Mega Test became the sole official entrance tests, by vote of the membership. Later, Dr. Hoeflin's Titan Test was added. (The Mega was also compromised, so scores after 1994 are currently not accepted; the Mega and Titan cutoff is now 43—but either the LAIT cutoff or the cutoff on Dr. Hoeflin's tests will need to be changed, as they are not equivalent.)

Mega publishes this irregularly-timed journal. The society also has a (low-traffic) members-only e-mail list. Mega members, please contact the Editor to be added to the list.

For more background on Mega, please refer to Darryl Miyaguchi's "A Short (and Bloody) History of the High-IQ Societies,"

<http://www.eskimo.com/~miyaguch/history.html>

and the official Mega Society page,

<http://www.megasociety.org/>

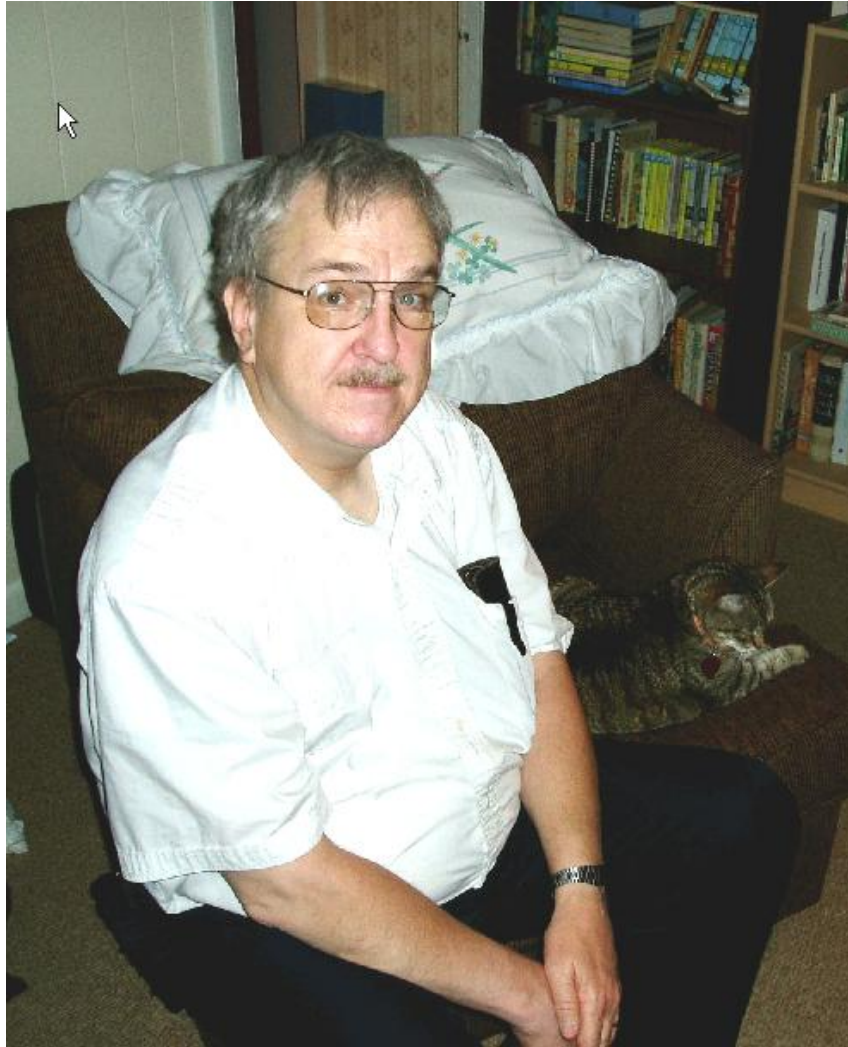
*Noesis*, the journal of the Mega Society, #185, November 2007.

*Noesis* is the journal of the Mega Society, an organization whose members are selected by means of high-range intelligence tests. Jeff Ward, 13155 Wimberly Square #284, San Diego, CA 92128, is Administrator of the Mega Society. Inquiries regarding membership should be directed to him at the address above or:

[ward-jeff@san.rr.com](mailto:ward-jeff@san.rr.com)

Opinions expressed in these pages are those of individuals, not of *Noesis* or the Mega Society.





Robert Dick, 11/1/43-8/30/07

**Kevin Langdon**

Robert Dick's wife, Barbara, called me to let me know that Robert succumbed to pancreatic and liver cancer on August 30.

Bob Dick was an early member of several higher-IQ societies. He served as Membership Officer of the Prometheus Society and Mega Society Ombudsman and was active in the societies' studies of the psychometric statistics of the extreme right tail of the bell curve. He was a fierce opponent of tyranny by overzealous society officers.

Robert was a software engineer. He designed communication equipment for the military. He received his B.A. from MIT and his Ph.D. from Cornell.

He is survived by his wife, a sister, and his son, Robert, Jr.

Bob will be missed by his many friends in the high-IQ societies.

# Remembering Robert Dick

**Richard May**

Bob Dick obtained an approximately ceiling-level I.Q. score on the Langdon Adult Intelligence Test. Bob wrote about being a chronic schizophrenic in the Prometheus Society journal, *Gift of Fire*. Bob used to mail old issues of *Commentary* to me.

Once after reading an essay I'd written on the art of Edvard Munch in *Gift of Fire*, he mailed me a beautiful book on Munch that he randomly discovered at a discount book store, just out of the blue. Bob once wrote to me when we disagreed about some matter that he "respected me as a fair-minded person and as a thinker." This was mutual.

Bob had a highly unusual take on the teachings of Jesus. He was not of Jewish descent, but developed a major interest in Judaism and attended at different times both a Conservative and a Reform synagogue. To my knowledge he never formally converted, but seemed more at home within the teachings of Judaism than in the Protestant Christianity of his upbringing. Nevertheless he maintained his interest in the teachings of Jesus and also seemed to have a deep appreciation of Thich Nhat Hanh's presentation of Buddhism, which I shared. The Bob Dick who could be classified was not the real Bob Dick!

He once wrote in an essay for *Gift of Fire*: "*Having been is a blessed state.*"

## A Remark by Bob Dick Remembered

**Brian Schwartz**

I still remember something he wrote on the fire list about six years ago. "Nobody thinks like me. Nobody feels like me." And now it's true. He will be missed.

## Robert Dick and the Prometheus Society

**Fred Britton**

Bob was the one who coined the term "firelist" when we were discussing what the name for our new email list should be.

Some of his comments indicate that Bob was a true "Outsider," in the Grady Towers sense of the word. Even in the Prometheus Society Bob evidently felt like an outsider. On several occasions he mentioned his disappointment that no one responded to his articles, often about spirituality and religion, in *Gift of Fire*.

*Requiescat in pacem.*

# Robert Dick's Final Days

**Karyn Hunting**

I never knew Bob Dick very well until he became sick this past year. He called me, a bit tentative at first and concerned that he might be bothering me, to talk with someone who was going through something like he was going through. Of course he wasn't bothering me. I was delighted to hear from him, and spoke to him on the phone several times during his illness.

Bob was, simply put, a kind and genuine man. At least that's how I knew him. I know the fears he was facing, and we talked about them. We talked about death, about terminal illness, about hope, about available medical treatments, about trusting oneself over trusting what certain physicians might say regarding one's own health.

Something in me truly hoped that Bob would make it. I was worried about him when he had called to tell me that he was feeling terribly weak and without the energy to accomplish certain tasks. Knowing that he had had cancer before, I feared the worst. Though he was told that it was something else that was causing the problem, I urged him to get appropriate tests to see if the cancer had returned and metastasized. It's not something someone with cancer in remission wants to hear, but I think he heard the pleading in my voice. There is a natural tendency when one faces cancer, and particularly the possibility of dying from it, to go through a stage of denial. In Bob's case, denial could not be a good thing.

I was glad, in an odd sort of way, when Bob told me that they finally told him the cancer was back. I was glad because I thought it would help to know, help allow him the time he needed to get treatment. Not glad that the cancer was back, though I had suspected that it might be the reason for the ailments he complained of—and had told him so. I think that somehow maybe he knew it, too, as he had called me precisely because I was a cancer patient facing my own mortality as he must have felt was also the case with him.

I cried when I heard that Bob Dick had died. I felt a connection to him somehow—a friendship borne of a common struggle, common fears, common hopes, and a common fight to live. Shortly before Bob died, he called me to say he thought he wouldn't live much longer. I was quite ill at the time, and hadn't answered the phone. I listened to the lengthy message he left more than once. There was something in his voice, an ending of something. I didn't know what I would say to Bob the next time I talked to him.

Bob never called back. He died shortly after that last call. If there were any way to get a message to him, I would tell him this:

*Thank you, Bob, for the privilege of knowing you. I am so sorry for what you had to go through. I am so sorry your doctors didn't give you the kind of hope that mine gave me. And I am sorry that I didn't get to speak with you that one last time. I wish I could have given you more comfort than I was able to. I simply wish I could have done more for you, more to make your remaining time on this earth better and easier. I wish you were still with us. It is with a truly heavy heart that I lose you—that we all lose you. Goodbye, my friend.*

# Reflections from Within a Midlife Crisis

Robert Dick

I told a friend that I have been wondering lately what it is like to be dead. She said that was understandable, as I am the right age for a midlife crisis (44) and am closer to death, most likely, than to birth. My thought processes having been so blessed, I continue with it.

I do not believe in reincarnation. Having no memory of past life is the same to me as being a new and different person. I don't believe in heaven and hell. This life is sufficient, I believe, to conduct all of one's morality, even God's. Cruelty is an abomination; that God is eternally cruel I find a despicable concept. But what of heaven? Well, what we do now determines what happens to us in heaven. It is this life that makes a difference, and all the making of difference is in this life. Therefore, heaven lacks significance, hence is less heavenly than life on earth.

No, our little life rounded by a sleep is enough. And now my midlife crisis sense of urgency asks, what difference am I making? How can I make a difference before it is too late? Help right overcome wrong, that is what I want to do. My employment is concentrated on military electronics, by choice. I may yet help the Free World stave off the totalitarian assault. I write a lot of letters to the editor. People may not agree, but they shouldn't be able to say they weren't warned.

Perhaps I am a little barbaric. I see life as fundamentally a fight. Perhaps it should be fundamentally an artistry. Make something beautiful for God, says Malcolm Muggeridge. Someday, God willing, fighting will be a thing of the past, and where will that leave my contribution—on the dustheap of history? No. In the cool of the evening it will be well to venerate those who bore the heat of the day. I want to be venerable. A noble aim to head into old age with.

What is death? This eye on the world will close. The inside and the outside will be severed, and with it all vision of the inside of itself. Void. Just as I know of all things through this corporeal frame, so I will know nothing. Shudder. I like to think there is a living being in back of everything, including me. That being's eye will never close, and so the world will always go on. Here I am, a little strand teased out of the great rope of being. The strand ends, the rope goes on. The strand, if it is wise, will contribute to the strength of the rope, and not just protrude from it.

So what now? I do not want to divorce my wife or change my job. I don't want to move to a new house. I do want to meditate more and for now try to be more of a source than a sink. I want to live so that God is proud of me. "Behold my servant Robert," He may say to the adversary. "My beloved son," may He say to me.

"He fought the good fight." There are worse epitaphs.



# QUANTA

## The Quick-and-easy Alpha-Numeric Test of Ability

Ronald K. Hoeflin  
P. O. Box 539  
New York, NY 10101  
USA

**INTRODUCTION:** Lewis M. Terman and his colleagues at Stanford University created the first American intelligence test, the Stanford-Binet, in 1916. Whereas Alfred Binet, the creator of the first modern intelligence test in France in 1905, had been primarily interested in locating mentally retarded children for special assistance in school, Terman was especially interested in the gifted, and in 1921 collected a group of 1528 California schoolchildren, 94% of whom scored 140 IQ or above and the remaining 6% in the 135-139 range. Terman said that about one person in 200 could score 140 IQ or above on the Stanford-Binet. Noticing that in tests including many different types of problems, the sort of problem that correlated best with overall performance appeared to involve such things as the size of one's vocabulary or one's reading comprehension. Accordingly, Terman defined intelligence as "the ability to acquire and manipulate concepts" (see p. 86 of *Terman and the Gifted*, published in 1975, by May Seago). Thus, to test the abilities of members of his gifted group as adults, Terman and his colleagues devised two Concept Mastery Tests, Form A and Form T, each with 190 problems, testing 954 members of his gifted group at an average age of about 30 in 1939-1940 and 1,004 at an average age of about 41 in 1950-1952. These tests had little mathematical content, unlike the familiar SAT and GRE tests for high-school and college seniors, respectively.

**EXAMPLES:** I felt that a concept-mastery type of test could be devised that would weight math and verbal aptitude about equally by requiring participants to identify the meaning of various famous (or not-so-familiar) numbers, as in the following examples:

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Test Item	Problem	Answers
A.	26	Alphabet
B.	98.6	(Human) body temperature
C.	1492	(Christopher) Columbus
D.	007	(James) Bond
E.	90210	Beverly Hills

**TEST CONDITIONS:** In keeping with the “Quick-and-easy” description of this test in its title, I ask all participants to use no reference aids during the first hour of their attempt. After one hour, I ask that everyone attempt to solve the problems using reference aids, including computer searches, halting your attempt 24 hours after you began the test, even if you rested or slept during that period. Please put any new or revised solutions in a second column to the right of the answers you arrived at within the first hour. Mark problems you solved with the aid of a computer with C, those you solved with reference aids but not a computer with R, and those you solved with no reference aids after one hour with N.

**SCORING FEE:** To insure that participants take the test somewhat seriously, there will be a \$20 scoring fee, payable to “Ronald K. Hoeflin” at the above address.

**MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS:**

(1) Some of the numbers have more than one plausible meaning. Even if I did not think of your answer, you will be counted correct if at least three of the highest ten scorers gave roughly the same answer as you did.

(2) Some of the numbers are approximate. When reference sources give different numbers, I have generally preferred the numbers given in Wikipedia.

(3) Since this is not a multiple-choice test, there is no penalty for guessing, i.e., you will not have a percentage of your wrong answers deducted from you overall score, so that negative scores will not be possible.

(4) Please give your scores on previous tests to help in norming this test. Do not assume that I have your scores readily at hand, even if you've sent them to me before.

(5) Please ask your friends (or total strangers) to try the test, or post it on web discussion lists, since the more who try it the better. No need to be a member of a high-IQ society to try this test.

(6) The problems are arranged in order of numerical size from lowest to highest, rather than in order of difficulty. Once I have results, I may rearrange them in order of difficulty.

(7) Put your name and address at the upper righthand corner of your answer sheets so that I will know where to send your score report.

(8) Answers should preferably be neatly printed or typed on 8.5 by 11 inch sheets of paper for convenience in storage.

(9) If there are enough participants to norm this test, and if the norms indicate that the test has sufficient ceiling, I may use it as an admissions test for prospective new members of the various Terman societies (TOPS, 99<sup>th</sup> percentile; OATHS, 99.9<sup>th</sup> percentile; Epi-metheus, 99.997<sup>th</sup> percentile; and Omega (99.9999<sup>th</sup> percentile).

(10) This test is intended for people whose native language is English. If your native language is not English, you may still try the test but should not regard your score as an adequate assessment of your ability. We learn our first language as if we were deciphering hieroglyphics, so that our language-learning experience is like a gigantic, years-long intelligence test. That seems to be why concept mastery is a good measure of intelligence.

## The Problems

1. - 4,004
2. - 1,378
3. - 776
4. - 753
5. - 459.67
6. - 399
7. - 273.15
8. - 44
9. 00
10. 0.00000 00000 00000 00000 00000 00000 00066  
26068 96
11. 0.00000 00001
12.  $1/299,792,458$
13. 0.000001
14.  $1/1836$
15.  $20/200$
16.  $480/1080$
17. 1.41421356237
18. 1.609344
19. 2.71828 18284 59045
20. 3.26
21. 4.22
22.  $8 \frac{1}{2}$
23.  $7 + 5 = 12$
24. 17
25. 23
26. 26.2
27. 33
28. 38

- 29. 41
- 30. 42
- 31. 46
- 32. 57.295779513
- 33.  $39 + 27 = 66$
- 34. 72
- 35. 76
- 36. 87
- 37. 88
- 38. 90
- 39. 101
- 40. 102
- 41. 104
- 42. 111
- 43. 144
- 44. 150
- 45. 192
- 46. 206
- 47. 221B
- 48. 238
- 49. 256
- 50. 420
- 51. 451
- 52. 453.59237
- 53. 490
- 54. 500
- 55. 535
- 56. 555
- 57. 600
- 58. 622
- 59. 666

60. 969
61. 986
62. 1,001
63. 1054
64. 1066
65. 1,129
66. NCC1701
67. 1729
68. 1815
69. 1859
70. 2001
71. 2,684
72. 5,280
73. 6,076.1155
74. 22,241
75. 24,901.55
76. 25,765
77. 29,017
78. 35,814
79. 43,560
80. 186,282.397
81. 238,855
82. 988,968
83. 31,556,926
84. 92,955,817.7
85. 275383572
86. 4,540,000,000
87. 6284968128
88. 6,600,000,000
89. 9,192,631,770
90. 112358132134





# A Question Ignored and Marginalized in Public Discourse

Andrew Beckwith  
with Kevin Langdon

Even if global warming did not exist, current human population levels would *not* be sustainable. What people do not realize is that even if *no* global climatic change were occurring due to human activities, we could not continue on with the present petrol-based global economy much longer. There's simply *not enough* to go around for all of the present numbers of the human race.

It appears that a number of us are stuck on stupid with respect to thinking that there is any chance of maintaining the present status quo. It is *not* sustainable.

One does not need to appeal to global warming to make that argument stick. There are a hundred other reasons. For example, the oceans are dying because of human pollution, which is not directly linked to global warming. And from [http://www.kenrahn.com/jfk/the\\_critics/Schoenman/What\\_strategy.html](http://www.kenrahn.com/jfk/the_critics/Schoenman/What_strategy.html) :

One-fifth of the world's population lacks potable water. The World Health Organization estimates that over the next two decades, 70 million people will die from a form of tuberculosis which is curable by a simple administration of an antibiotic, and one billion people will be infected.

That is as scary as hell.

Did anyone ever care to look at how the present day catches of sea life for feeding human populations are taking a major hit?

We are running on empty.

Global warming, if it exists, is *one* culprit. It's at least the case that something pretty damn funny is going on with the weather all over the world. But there's also the very serious problem of human pollution poisoning the ecosystem and *overfishing*. Also, countries such as India and China are taking major hits to their agricultural productivity. We are in for mega famines of a size not seen in human history, possibly as soon as the next decade.

Humanity needs to take steps to limit its own reproduction. The longer it avoids this responsibility the more terrible the crash will be when it comes. But almost no one is even entertaining this as a serious policy option. To advocate anything of the kind is the kiss of death for one's political prospects.

The population crisis is real. We can only hope that some real action will be taken before it's too late.

# *Litton's Problematical Recreations*

**Ron Yannone**

In 1971 I was a junior in high school and was introduced to several little booklets via my friend Klaus Rittenbach's father Otto titled *Litton's Problematical Recreations*. Each booklet could fit in my shirt pocket and contained about 3 dozen math problems. The problems were unorthodox and "original" (unlike my high school math textbook problems) and each problem statement was accompanied by a simple cartoon-like illustration—one page per problem. The math required varied from simple reasoning and algebraic manipulation to number theory and introductory calculus.

I recall sharing some of the problems with my friend David Anick—who eventually went to MIT for all three degrees in mathematics and was an associate professor at MIT for years (now a medical doctor in Cambridge, MA)—and about half of these stumped him! Years passed—and I was delighted to see a book in the Utica, NY library titled *Litton's Problematical Recreations*, published by James F. Hurley; publisher was Van Nostrand Reinhold Company [1971]. It was a form of déjà vu for me. It contained many of these problems, presented via math topics.

A few years ago I saw a book edited by Angela Dunn titled *Mathematical Bafflers* at Barnes & Noble Booksellers in Nashua, NH. This latest release is by Dover Publications. The original copyright (1964) was by *Litton Industries, Inc.*, and again in 1980 by Dover Publications; current ISBN: 0-486-23961-6; \$9.95, 217 pages.

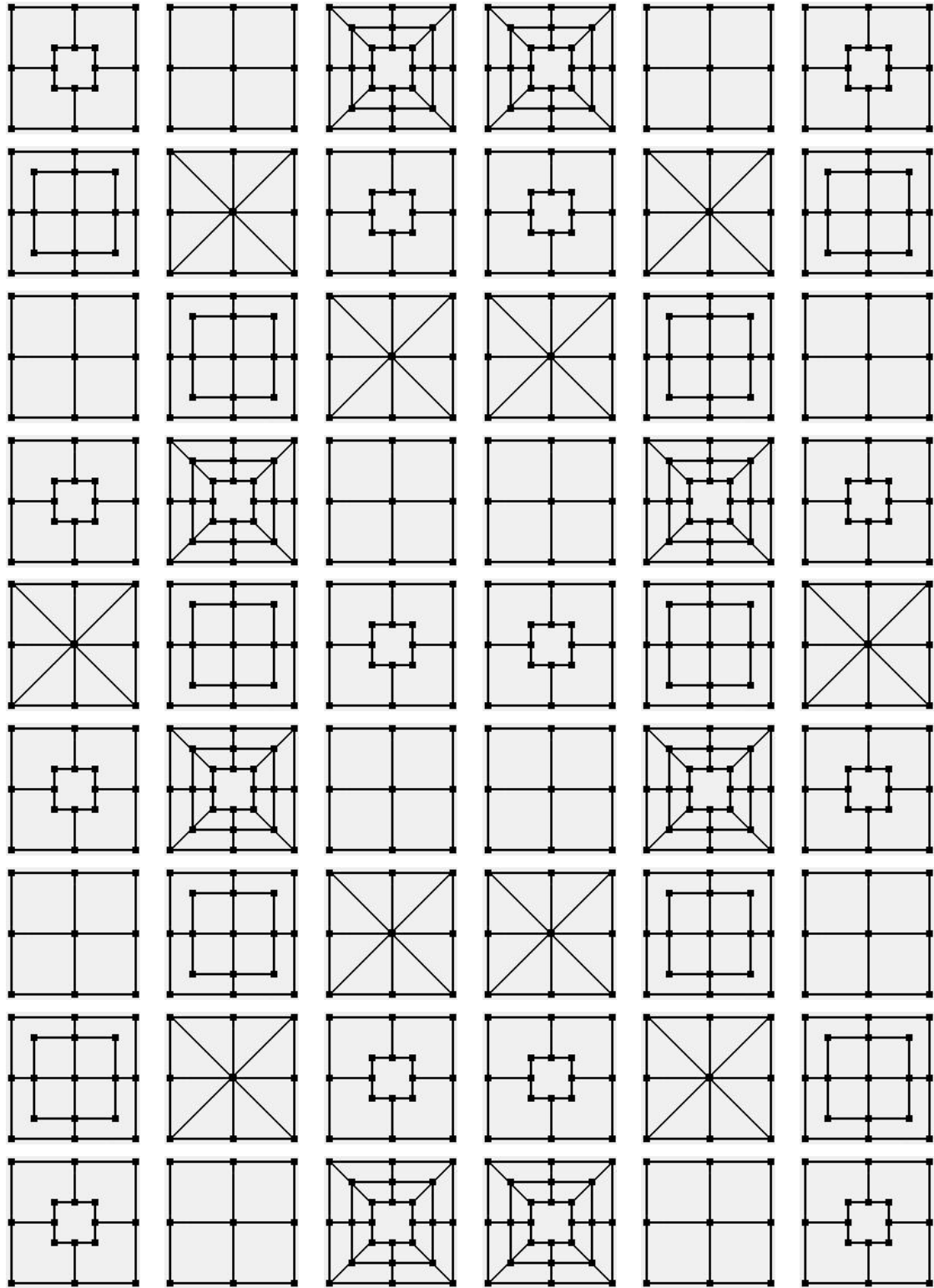
Angela Dunn's book contains 158 of what she, and mathematicians she consulted with, feel are the 'prime problems' from the 12 years (1959-1971) of the esteemed weekly *Problematical Recreations* which appeared in *Aviation Week and Electronic News*—periodicals read by mathematicians, engineers, computer programmers, and over the years, by serious puzzlists who heard about the special section.

**From the back cover** – Let the puzzlist beware: *Mathematical Bafflers* will disappoint those seeking the simple, straightforward, drudge-rewarding problem; it will delight those who have despaired of a truly challenging collection of mind-teasers. Beginners are advised to look elsewhere—the 158 conundrums offered here were designed by experts for experts—and many experts were, simply, baffled.

**From the Preface to the Dover Edition** – Week after week letters from engineers, mathematicians, scientists, and puzzle fans in general would offer a more elegant solution, or an interesting mathematical side-light to a problem from our series. Often readers would challenge us for an explanation, and occasionally they would disagree, sometimes vehemently, with our published solution. But always they exhibited original thinking. It was the quantity of imaginative puzzle contributions—novel offerings poured in from all over the United States and from a dozen foreign countries—that kept the campaign going at a high level of interest for twelve years.

The front and back cover and sample sections from the book can be found at:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=7NWJbrXdnMQC&pg=PP5&lpg=PP5&dq=angela+dunn+litt on&source=web&ots=JxrRv2sket&sig=vu9RhOEa543DNbLCEKCRPkF8rhQ#PPA236,M1>



# Ask May-Tzu

**Q:** What is the relationship between the reality of existence and the existence of reality?

**May-Tzu:** This question is answered quite clearly in May-Tzu's *Prolegomena to Any Future Obfuscation*. There is no single relationship between the reality of existence and the existence of reality, but multiple relationships. This is a simple matter of ontological-existential combinatorics in N-valued logic. (The CTMU is seen by some as a special case.) For Aristotelian logic in which  $N = 2$ : Existence is either real or unreal. Likewise, non-existence is either real or unreal. Furthermore, reality also either exists or does not exist. Likewise, non-reality either exists or does not exist.

However, in N-valued logic there may be gradations of existence and/or non-existence, a quantized set of values approaching a continuum as its limit. Ideally in this case the continuum may be mapped upon various topological structures in N-dimensional hyperspace, in order to maximize the degree of lucidity of the obfuscation.

William of Ockham's Razor, the principle proposed in the fourteenth century, said *Pluralitas non est ponenda sine neccesitate*, which translates as "entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily." By contrast May-Tzu's Canon is more useful in metaphysics. "Words should not be simplified unnecessarily," thereby reducing the danger of being understood.

—May-Tzu

## Fragments

Nothingness dances dreams of the dead,  
soul-eyed shadows of devouring moon.  
Star mind feasts upon Orphean strains,  
alchemical food of Endless sun.

—May-Tzu



## Pooky

**Kevin Langdon**

The Editor's cats Jadzia and Bashir appeared on the back covers of *Noesis* ##183 and 184, respectively. Here's our third cat, Pooky.

Pooky arrived on our front porch when another of our cats was dying about four years ago. She hung around and it became clear that she wanted to be our cat, so we adopted her. She'd apparently been abandoned. She still has a lot of anxiety about being left alone, though not as much as she did when we first got her.

We had a couple of other cats when Pooky arrived but they were old and they died. She freaked out when we got a pair of kittens (Jadzia and Bashir) a couple of years ago, but she's survived despite having to share her territory with them.

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