

Ask him, he's the genius

By Rich Perlberg
staff writer

Just how smart is Anton Andersen?

Ask him. He can tell you.

And he can tell you in any of the 37 languages he speaks, including a sign language.

In plain English: Andersen (his full name is Romero Anton Monteban-Andersen), a Bloomfield Township resident, lays claim to being one of the smartest men in Michigan. Ohio and Indiana, too, for what that's worth.

His boast is based on his IQ, which at over 164 is among the highest recorded in those states. In IQ circles, a 164 IQ qualifies Andersen for the Prometheus Society, which is four steps above the much-heralded Mensa Society where members need only a 133 IQ.

Andersen, who works with computer systems for the Chrysler Corp., has an implicit sense of humor and carries both a secretive, foreign and precocious past. He read the World Book encyclopedia by the third grade and feels fortunate, if not arrogant, about his intelligence.

"I DON'T feel superior to other people," he says. "I feel happy that I don't have to struggle like other people."

"Sometimes I feel guilty like when gym class struggles in school and gets a C-minus and I barely listen in class and get my A."

"I realize that God made us different. I just happen to have a high IQ."

(Andersen will be sharing the fruits of his IQ with Observer and Eccentric readers in a new weekly column called "Ask the Genius." The question-and-answer column debuts today.)

Andersen is somewhat mysterious about his background, other than to say he was raised in a foreign land, worked for General Motors in another state, and moved to Michigan to take a job with Chrysler.

He said that although his notoriety as a man with a high IQ preceded him, his co-workers aren't overly awed by his reputation.

"Everyone knew who I was before I walked in," he says. "But I'm working with people in a very specialized field. It's not likely that I would say anything profound."

OTHERS WHO meet Andersen for the first time expect too much, he adds. "They almost expect me to be a prophet. They think I can tell them what the next world will be like or what is the cure for cancer."

"People who know me know that I just enjoy joke telling — a lot of puns."

Andersen isn't shy about his intelligence — he is an officer for a MENSA chapter that meets in Southfield and he edits a newsletter sent to others with high IQs — but he says he tries to keep his status in perspective.

"It is a means to an end," he says. "It helps me fulfill my job. The raw material is inherited. If you want to learn, you will."

He says he doesn't have the patience for card games such as bridge or does he play chess, "a game for people who like to prove they can do something. I like to learn something rather than show off what I already know."

Art is not a laughing matter

Dear Anton:

My husband took a painting class as part of his college requirements. At the end of the semester there was an art show that displayed the work of the students. The teacher must have been crazy to want to show those "works of art." They were horrible.

I couldn't help but laugh at one of the paintings of a naked woman. She didn't look like a woman, and her hands were on backward.

My husband says I shouldn't laugh at other people's work. I say you have to draw the line somewhere. What do you say?

Alice G.

Art is totally subjective. What is attractive to one person certainly does not have to be attractive to another. If you have to laugh, do it



ask the genius

Anton
Anderssen

when no one is looking. Be careful how much you laugh at other people's art, though. Zeuxis, the great Greek painter of the fifth century B.C., couldn't control himself. He laughed so hard at a painting that he burst a blood vessel and died.

Dear Anton:
How many stars are there in the universe?

Sara L.

There are approximately 100 sextillions that we know of. If you were to count all the stars at the rate of 100 stars each second, it would take you 10,000 times longer than the universe has been in existence.

Do you have a question for the genius? Send it to the Eccentric, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 48012.

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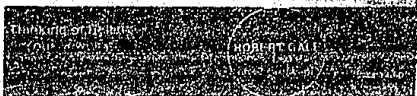
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Madison Community Hospital, 30671 Stephenson Highway, Madison Heights, needs volunteers, 18 and older, to escort patients and visitors, visit patients, or help in the office. Also available is participation in outreach programs in Oakland and Macomb counties. Call Carolyn Gallmeyer, 558-8000, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekdays.

Marillac Hall, St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, 29475 Inkster, Farmington Hills, needs volunteers as drivers to take pregnant teens to Providence Hospital for pre-natal visits, craft workers to teach skills to groups, a special friend for an assigned girl and possible labor helper, labor room coach to assist a teen during labor and delivery. For more information, call Myra Luzod, 628-7327, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays.

Michigan Metro Girl Scout Council, 28 W. Adams, Detroit, needs volunteer leaders, women and men, in Wayne and southern Oakland counties. If you are friendly, 18 and older, concerned about the well being of girls, and a high school graduate, make a flexible time commitment. Training provided. Call Miriam Banister, 694-4475, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekdays.

For information on other opportunities or if your organization needs volunteers, call The Center for Volunteerism, United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, at 533-0622 between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., or write 51 W. Warren, Detroit, MI 48201.