

MENSA® | BULLETIN

The Magazine of  American MENSA®

The ART *of* WAR

On the ground in
Afghanistan

INSIDE:

Mensans witness
HISTORY

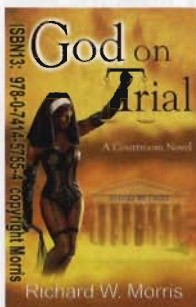
One man's
OBSESSION
to quench his thirst

Winter Chill

One new book proves that the coldest months are perfect for spooky tales.

Most everyone thinks of Halloween as the time for paranormal stuff, but as someone once wrote, “Winter is the season for ghosts.” And so here’s yet another story, set in Salem, Mass., that would be an ideal companion for a long, wintry night beside the fire—*New York Times* best-seller *The Lace Reader* by Brunonia Barry (HarperCollins). Your host is Towner Whitney, a self-confessed unreliable narrator, whose origins are a family of Salem women who can read the future in the patterns in lace and harbor many secrets stretching back generations. Having experienced severe traumas while living on the West Coast, she returns to Salem to recuperate, when suddenly her great aunt Eva drowns mysteriously, a local woman disappears, and Whitney begins to uncover the shocking truth about the death of her twin sister. *People* calls it “a spine-tingler,” *Time* describes it as a “richly imagined saga of passion, suspense, and magic,” and the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* declares that it “casts an enthralling spell.”

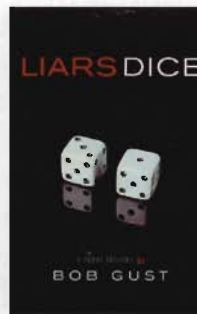
Now on to more winter reading, only with fewer beasties that go bump in the night.



God on Trial: A Courtroom Novel by Richard W. Morris (Infinity Publishing Company). Thomas Jefferson said, “The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no god.” Putting God on trial, now there’s an interesting concept. But

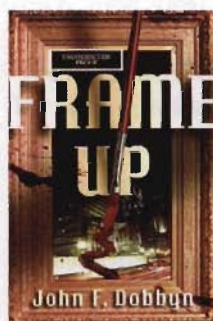
how does one subpoena God? Anyway, as Morris notes, “This is an intellectual, philosophical story of murder, religion, corruption, and female domination. Mensans are interested in thinking, and this book requires it. It is not a book for the faint of heart or closed mind.” He challenges readers to think about religion and ask themselves what they know and how they know it. When university graduate student David Stone challenges the Pastor, the head of a huge and powerful religious movement, he unknowingly threatens Sister Leah’s lifestyle of crime,

corruption, and debauchery, and thus is arrested for blasphemy. To decide his guilt, the Bible Belt jury must first determine if the state has defined God and proved his existence using the Federal Rules of Evidence. If you’ve ever watched televangelists on TV, attended a mega-church, or watched movies like “Elmer Gantry” or “Marjoe,” you’ll recognize some of the characters.



Liars Dice by Bob Gust (Syren Book Company). All right legal beagles, how would you solve this one? Dixon Donnelly, a Minneapolis business attorney, is called in to represent the estate of the recently deceased Duke MacKenzie, who is being posthumously sued for shooting a burglar. Simple self-defense? Well, not exactly, because

at the time of the burglary, ol’ Duke was sleeping with the burglar’s wife, then took his own life before telling his story to anyone. Initially, the case seems to be nothing more than an insurance claim for payment of the burglar’s injuries, but it turns far more ominous, as Donnelly finds himself drawn into the unfamiliar worlds of criminal law and small-town America. He also encounters the love interest of his life and learns important lessons about himself and about truth, love, and justice.



Frame Up by John F. Dobbyn (Oceanview Publishing). Being that fiction genres have become more precisely defined as of late, this one qualifies as a “legal thriller.” Dobbyn grew up in Boston, attended Boston Latin, and graduated from Harvard, all of which, in my mind, are plusses, he also has served as a professor of law at Villanova Law

School since 1969, so he knows of what he writes. Close friends Michael Knight and John McKedrick graduated from Harvard Law together, but they chose very different