

Southern Connecticut mensa

SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR MARCH

Wednesday, March 8, 7:00. Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner. This regular dinner is now being held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Old Sorrento Restaurant, Newtown Road, Danbury, CT. Interested Mensans should contact Ward Mazzucco at (203) 744-1929, ext. 25, wjm@danburylaw.com, or Rev. Bill Loring at (203) 794-1389.

Saturday, March 18, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., Bridgeport. "Getting Free Publicity" for your organization, business or event is a challenge in this information-laden world. Manny Ratafia has been written up in over 100 publications including multiple times in Business Week, the New York Times, the Wall St. Journal, Fortune, Forbes, and numerous Connecticut newspapers. Join us while he shares his experience in this realm and offers practical suggestions on how to stand out from the crowd. Please call Lee Steuber at 203-730-1634 for information and reservations. Dinner is \$10.00 and includes everything but the cash bar. Dress is casual and guests are welcome.

Friday, March 24, 7:00 p.m. Poker Night, Norwalk, CT.

Marc and Suzanne Leichtling are hosting a relaxed evening of low-stakes poker at their home in Norwalk. For information and directions, call them at (203) 838-3566 or e-mail leicht@discovernet.net.

Saturday, March 25, 2:00. THEATRE EVENT: Shakespeare's *Richard III* at the Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven. The Yale School of Drama presents one of Shakespeare's most gripping tragic histories. Tickets for this matinee performance are just \$20.00 if we can get a group of ten, so if you are interested, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 332-2548 or e-mail Jmizera@hotmail.com before Saturday, March 18.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR APRIL

Wednesday, April 12, 7:00. Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner. See above listing for details.

Saturday, April 15, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., Bridgeport.

Saturday, April 22, 8:15 p.m. THEATRE EVENT: Eric Campbell's *Theft*, at the Clockwork Repertory Theatre, 133 Main St., Oakville, CT., 06779. After returning from an anniversary celebration, two couples find that the host's house has been burgled. To make matters worse, the thief is still in the house and he knows dark secrets about everyone, including a possible murder. What will happen? Come see this show with us and find out. Tickets are \$12. Please call or e-mail Jim Mizera at (203) 332-2548, Jmizera@hotmail.com for information or reservations. This is a small but popular theater so reservations MUST be made by Monday, April 8.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST**Friday, April 14, 6:30 p.m., Intertel Dinner/Social, Timothy's Restaurant, New London, CT.**

Intertel, the society for people in the 99.9th IQ percentile, invites Southern Ct. Mensans and their friends to their dinner and social. Diners will be seated at round tables for 8, with separate checks and accessible parking. **Limited to 16 people.** Call Emil Soderberg at (860) 859-0748 for reservations and directions.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL . . .

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Nobody likes to think about dying. For most of us, the thought causes anxiety or depression. That's probably why so many of us avoid making provisions for what will happen to our worldly goods after we pass on. If you're one of the few people who have a thoughtfully prepared will in a place where it can easily be found, well, you've done your loved ones a great favor. But if you're unsure whether you need a will, or whether the one you have is going to do the job, here are some questions that may motivate you to put your affairs in order. True or false?

1. Your will is your own business and you shouldn't need to discuss it with anyone.

False. If no one knows whether you have a will, your next of kin will be legally bound to search for one before they can begin to settle your estate. If you've made a will but haven't told anyone where it is, that search may be even more frustrating. Unless the executor you've named is truly willing and able to perform an executor's duties, they won't be performed well. Communication is a key component of having your will implemented when the time comes.

2. You don't need a will if you want everything to go to your next of kin anyway.

Depends. Exactly who will your next of kin be? How capable will they be of filing your final tax return, physically cleaning out your residence, deciding how to dispose of your antique china collection? Your nearest relatives under the law are not necessarily the ones you felt closest to in life. If you choose to go the intestacy route, make sure you and your loved ones know the applicable laws of the state where you legally reside.

3. There is no reason why relatives not named in your will should know how you chose to dispose of your assets.

False. Even if you leave a perfectly valid will naming, say, your girlfriend as sole heir, many states (including Connecticut and New York) require notification of all relatives who would have been heirs if there had been no will. If you've become estranged from one of your parents, siblings, or children, your heir could spend years making "due diligence" efforts to locate that relative before your estate can be settled. See 2. above and keep current addresses of relatives in this category in your address book.

4. Keeping your money in a joint account with right of survivorship is a good way to simplify your estate.

Depends. This strategy will put ready cash in the hands of your beneficiary when you die, but beware: there are no restrictions on what that individual can do with the money. You may assume it will go to pay immediate expenses such as cremation or burial, but your beneficiary may just pocket the windfall and leave those costs unpaid. Whoever does pay your bills might then have to wait months for reimbursement out of whatever remains in your estate, such as proceeds from the sale of your home. See 1. above and discuss your wishes with your beneficiary.

5. Once you've written a will and had it properly witnessed and approved by a reputable law firm, you can rest assured there won't be any ambiguities when you die.

False. Law firms change, family and friends change, legal terminology changes. If your will is more than 10 years old, if someone named in your will has died or changed their relationship to you, or if your lawyer has retired or changed firms, by all means revisit the document and make any changes necessary so that it continues to reflect your wishes.

REFERENCES:

<http://www.nolo.com> offers a wealth of FAQs and practical information, do-it-yourself books, will software, etc.

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/cgi-bin/claws?law=38> is the actual text of New York State law for estates, powers and trusts.

<http://www.findlaw.com/> provides links to an array of legal topics.

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uniform/probate.html> provides a typical state's version of the Uniform Probate Code.

Elsa Peterson Turner is a freelance editor and writer based in Norwalk.

Many thanks to attorneys Albert D'Antonio of Haymond, Napoli & Diamond in Hartford; and Sharon Giese, who has an independent practice in Westport; for reviewing this article.

POETRY CORNER

A Rhetorical Lament of Seattle Hippies

As told by Spiro Agnew

Putty-gutted hippies grown dim
 In the din of Death's dumb bleating;
 Placard-cringing sons of raging angels
 Who will not serve;
 Musketed-puffballs come
 To seed the psychic ulcer;
 Fetused cripple gods once
 Laced with life, now purpled
 In pregnant living's boiling blood;
 Hollow sub-crusts of men masked
 Raggy-bearded.

How will you answer?
 Displumed, you strut powdered bones,
 Stench, and burned-out sprigs of hope.
 Pallbearers, how will you answer?
 Festering guts of a nation's hope,
 Wisdom was yours and you knew not why.
 We knew and tried to say.

by Gerard Brooker

The Trip Of A Lifetime -- South Africa and Brazil!

By Carole Bell

The light in South Africa is gorgeous! At six in the morning outside Bakubung Lodge in the bushveld, the air is cold. You get into a kind of longish jeep, amazed you're up so early after the excitement of a night ride searching wild animals against the dark sky. You sleep deeply after a day on safari; but not enough, if you want to experience what happens at dawn.

Ten minutes after the drive starts, you see it. The light! The clarity is startling. Passion awakens raw energy as you come to grips with the gift it is to be in South Africa. You sense being at the edge of the world. The privilege is humbling.

Until I saw that light on a South African morning, I'd wondered about movie characters who'd stay in Africa despite whatever disaster endangered life. Fires raging, (fill in the blank here) disaster spreading, they refuse any return to civilization. I never understood them, but it was just a movie, right?

I've seen the light in South Africa. Until seeing it, it's just a place on a map. Once there, that light gets you. Its wild beauty sears your heart.

I'd heard Paul Simon singing about the African sky. I'd seen movies. How could I have waited so long to experience this extreme pleasure, this Africa?

It was delicious to have the world's best binoculars with me. I took a waterproof, compact Nikon (8x25 Mountaineer II ATB), and a state-of-the-art SE series (10x42 SE-CF). The SE made whatever I looked at seem brighter than it did in real life; using it was like magic.

It was the trip of a lifetime, and I was worried. What should I take? Would I catch an exotic disease and regret going? What kind of camera to use? Which film? Should I take a laptop? Would I catch malaria? Should I get new walking shoes? I had twelve days. How would I find out?

John Gorman of Miami Mensa told me, "Just go for it!" Rossy Alexieva, Chair of Mensa Bulgaria sent mail: "Sounds fantastic. Enjoy life! Don't worry." Then I confided in Dorothea Orilio, from Broward Mensa. "Should I go?" Her appropriately-Mensan answer: "Think of all you will learn!"

What I learned the first night out was the joy of flying business class. My flight on Varig went to Africa via Brazil. Sleeping four nights on a plane isn't so bad when the seat goes almost completely back. Elegant food, special French wines, and unobtrusive service made traveling to Africa a delight. I loved the yellow rose in the bathroom. That said it all.

I carried a Nikon N60 camera. I hadn't updated lenses in years, and was impressed at what new lenses do. I only took two lenses, yet was super-equipped (both new lenses, the 35-80 mm. and the 80-200 mm. felt featherweight). I used Kodak Professional Ektachrome E100S transparency film. The "S" stands for saturated colors. It's particularly good for travel. I couldn't believe the color; every picture looked as if I could sell it to National Geographic!

It's 4,642 miles between Sao Paulo and Johannesburg. Flying time: 8 hours, 25 minutes. I tried to relate it to crossing the U.S. It's 1642 extra miles, over half again the cross-U.S. distance. Not bad in 8 _ hours. Business class leg room helped.

"If you're lucky, you'll arrive in Capetown just at the right moment, when the sun hits the mountain in a certain way. It depends on the light bouncing off the clouds." The man next to me looked at his watch as we landed in Johannesburg. "Yes, I think you will see it today."

I was lucky. The drive to Capetown's harbor was golden. You could see gold literally flooding the top of Table Bay Mountain. I will never forget the pure gold light.

Capetown is sophisticated. I hadn't expected it to look so young and fresh. You'd think you're in Baltimore, or maybe California. There's water, boats, the smell of salt from the sea, and stores you'd expect to find in Ghirardelli Square.

It's easy to forget this is Africa. Salvador Bahia, in Brazil, seems more African. It was my first day in South Africa, yet it looked like any upscale US city on a summer Saturday night.

I loved the Table Bay Hotel! In the center of the waterfront, it's filled with wonderful sculpture and art. The Table Bay's staff was really helpful. The huge bar was lined with early photos of Capetown. The best had to be -- let me see: Was it the up-to-date multi-plug outlets built into the wall so wherever you came from, your laptop and other appliances worked? Was it the truffles delivered nightly? Or was it the rose petals strewn around the room?

I had dinner the first night at the Cape Grace Hotel. The choice of seafood and wine outdid many top California restaurants. A quiet, elegant hotel, the Cape Grace even had a library for guests as company policy. During dinner, I watched a "fireworks concert" in the harbor.

Walking back to the Table Bay, I passed the Hard Rock Cafe and Planet Hollywood. With stores ranging from expensive jewelry to simple folkcraft, it wasn't at all what I'd expected in Africa.

From the mountain top at the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, the clouds look primeval. You could really feel this was where the world began, transporting yourself centuries back to imagine what early explorers had thought. Faded memories of elementary school classes came to mind. *I'm standing at the tip of the Cape of Good Hope.* I had to pinch myself.

Swirling mists so thick you could hardly see reminded me of San Francisco fog. Unlike the Bay Area version, this fog was *wet*. In my waterproof jacket, I decided to walk down instead of boarding the tram I'd taken to the top. A couple chatting in French walked ahead of me, sharing a large blue bath towel. It couldn't have been their first visit! I asked how they liked Capetown. Their surprising answer: "*Tres bien, mais, c'est plutot San Francisco!*" (It's great, but it could be San Francisco!)

The Cape's Atlantic Coast is a sequence of tiny beach neighborhoods served by a small red-and-yellow-colored train. I'd heard this charming Chapman's Peak Drive was often compared to the corniches in the South of France. Whatever else France may have, a drive along the Mediterranean lacks families of chacma baboons climbing all over your car. Or the local residents at Boulders Beach near Simon's Town -- a growing colony of endangered jackass penguin. From the rock dassies on Table Mountain to the wildlife along the Cape, I got the feeling at last of seeing new species and being in a truly exotic place. It foreshadowed stalking the Big Five on safari (lion, buffalo, leopard, rhino, elephant) and the wildebeests to come.

"Just one question: is it very dangerous? In Capetown?"

"Capetown? Nah! Only in Johannesburg, and only downtown."

I'd asked the Varig flight steward to tell me about South Africa. He was talking about whether I'd be safe. I only had an airport transfer in Johannesburg; no need to worry.

Until my plans changed. First, lunch on the terrace of the Mount Grace, an exquisite country hotel in Magaliesburg, on the way to the airport. An outdoor buffet, an inventive menu -- it felt good to be pampered. Then flight changes morphed the brief airport stop into staying in Johannesburg until midnight. With a day room at The Grace, a beautiful, small hotel in Rosebank, I had time to call Nolan Krombein, a friend from Mensa International and the Chairman of Mensa South Africa.

Later that night I shared dinner with Nolan and Ray, the Johannesburg area LocSec, giggling through a hilarious dinner in the middle of an upscale mall. Nolan escorted me on a pre-dinner tour of Johannesburg neighborhoods, which was an eye-opener. We said goodbye at the airport just before I boarded the plane to Brazil.

Of all the guidebooks, I liked Lonely Planet books best. To be fair, the question of danger in South Africa comes up often. Just be cautious. Common sense, and keeping your wits about you rule. I had no problems.

Before going, I'd asked a wise woman's advice about making the trip. Her answer: "Life's too too short, have dessert first."

Next: Rio de Janeiro.

WEB NOTES:

The site www.nationalatlas.gov publishes a map with layers of data that can be applied over the map - including census data, abandoned mines, migratory paths of birds, etc ... all sorts of things can be placed on the map from their data warehouse.

NOTED AND QUOTED

Acting is the ability to keep an audience from coughing.

JEAN-LOUIS BARRAULT

I never said that all actors are cattle; what I said was that all actors should be treated like cattle.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Classical music is the kind that we keep hoping will turn into a tune.

KIN HUBBARD

Jazz is the folk music of the machine age.

Jazz tickles your muscles, symphonies stretch your soul.

PAUL WHITEMAN

Lots of cats copy the Mona Lisa, but people still line up to see the original.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG, talking about his imitators

An unalterable and unquestioned law of the musical world required that the German text of French operas sung by Swedish artists should be translated into Italian for the clearer understanding of English-speaking audiences.

EDITH WHARTON, *Age of Innocence*

Rock journalism is people who can't write interviewing people who can't talk for people who can't read.

FRANK ZAPPA, quoted in L. Botts *Loose Talk*

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.

T. S. ELIOT

Better to write for yourself and have no public, than to write for the public and have no self.

CYRIL CONNOLY

An artist cannot speak about his art any more than a plant can discuss horticulture.

JEAN COCTEAU

Artists die twice. First creatively. Then physically. The second one is the easiest.

SYLVESTER STALLONE

If you wish to submit material, please write or e-mail Jim Mizera at PMB #181, 7365 Main St., Stratford, CT. 06614-1300, Jmizera@hotmail.com. E-mail submissions are preferred. Please include your name, address, and telephone number. Anonymous material will be rejected, although names will be withheld on request. Items will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Currently, the deadline for postal submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication, and the 20th of the month for e-mail submissions.

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(Monthly)

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