

## S o u t h e r n C o n n e c t i c u t m e n s a

### SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR OCTOBER

Wednesday, October 11, 7:00. Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner. This regular dinner is now being held the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:wjm@danburylaw.com), or Rev. Bill Loring at (203) 794-1389.

October`14, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., Bridgeport.

**Note: this is on the second Saturday not the third as is customary!!!!.** Our speaker will be Shoya Zichy, author of the newly published book *Women and the Leadership Q; a Breakthrough System for Achieving Power and Influence*. (McGraw Hill). Successful leaders earn more money, enjoy more perks, and have more job and personal satisfaction than most. In this practical, highly interactive workshop, you'll learn how to identify and develop your own leadership style in order to achieve longterm success. Shoya, who is on a brief break from her book-signing tour, will conduct a special session for Mensa at the Chapter dinner.

**RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR THIS DINNER!!!.** 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.

Each person that reserves for the dinner will receive a copy of the assessment tool that Shoya uses for the participants. She would like to have a chance to review these prior to the dinner. If at all possible, we will do this through email and faxing. It will be arranged when you reserve your spot at the dinner.

Saturday, Oct. 28, 8:00. THEATRE EVENT: *Write Me A Murder*, performed by the Town Players of New Canaan, at Waveny Park, South Ave., New Canaan. A humorous English murder mystery. Tickets are \$12. For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 332-2548 or e-mail [Jmizera@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmizera@hotmail.com), preferably before Thursday, October 26.

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 7:00. Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner. See above listing for details.

Saturday, Nov.`18, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., Bridgeport.

Saturday, Nov. 25, 8:00. THEATRE EVENT: *Man of La Mancha*, at the Wilton Playshop, 15 Lovers Lane (Rte. 33 & 106), Wilton, CT. Tickets are \$15. For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 332-2548 or e-mail [Jmizera@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmizera@hotmail.com). This is a small but popular theatre so please try to make your reservations as early as possible.

## THE NEST OF THE UNKNOWN BIRD

Gerard Brooker

Twice a year I go to my mother-in-law's in order to help her clean up her property. The last time I went, she asked me to clean out an old bird's nest that was ingeniously placed between the rain gutters and eaves of her roof, immediately behind some wild climbing roses. As it took me a while to get the rose branches out of the way, I had some time to take a close look at the nest before extracting it from its snug spot. I could see that the construction of the shell was an engineering feat; and I could see how creative was the selection of composing materials.

In fact, I was having an insight, odd as it might seem, about nature. Not a compellingly meaningful one? Perhaps not, but then.... The birds that had occupied it were gone, leaving no signs for me to believe that they were expecting to return. Insights are often simple. Here I was, typically human, thinking that I would know the signs a bird might leave if she/he was coming back. I really didn't think they'd leave a note "To Whom it May Concern: if you're thinking about destroying my family's home, please don't. A few kids are on the way, and we'll be coming back after our Florida trip." I realized that I wouldn't know the signs, and that perhaps birds don't leave signs. Simply, that birds have their own reference points and that I am not privy to them.

What I did know was that looking into the nest was like discovering an old house that was perfectly intact, yet without occupants. I had uncovered part of nature's past. Yes, I was on an archeological dig, and if I was discerning, I could tell a few things about the squatters of the past. For the next hour I would live in an excitingly different world, the world of birds.

If nothing else, the building bird was enterprising. I am "old school", so I would like to think that the primary builder of the home was the mother bird. It was clear that she sought out the exact kinds of materials she needed from man and nature to put together the nest she wanted for her babies. As I began to clean it out, I noticed how precisely the parts fit together, how clearly of a piece it all was, this condo of hers.

Here it was: a piece of blue sewing thread about twelve inches long interlaced with thick twine, the kind we use to wrap newspapers for garbage pickup. Lots of red thread. And, of course, small twigs were the girders. Lots of leaves and bits of paper, straw, cellophane wrapping, some gauze and pieces of pine. There were silver and gold slivers, probably from cigarette packages; an orange juice label with a hula dancer; lots of tissue paper and cigarette filters. Other bird feathers, especially from the blue jay, provided bedding. There was even some material marked "All promotional costs paid by RJRTC." Could it be that even the birds are receiving endorsements?

It was clear that the builder was attracted to bright colors and soft materials. I was impressed by the construction of the nest and by its intricate and firm binding. It was almond-shaped, an arc of precious cargo held together and centered by four tough twigs of equal length and width.

I wondered how long it took mom to make the nest. And how far she had to fly to acquire her materials. I wondered if the blue feathers of the jay bird were strewn about the floor of the nest as the result of a selective gathering or were they leftovers from a battle fought to protect the babies. I thought about the instinctual maternal urges and the process of selecting materials, a process that seemed orderly and progressive. A hard shell lined by soft things tied together by strings and cord. Maybe all things do have a purpose, even cigarette litter carelessly tossed by man, now used by birds.

How unique is the intelligence of birds. Not an intelligence as an I.Q. measured by man, or as an intelligence aided by hands that can build magnificent bridges and buildings. But as a measure of the creature's ability to negotiate its peculiar environment: to find food to sustain, as well as materials to house and protect.

Caught between my mother-in-law's needs and my desire to leave the nest alone, I felt sad. I felt like I was transgressing. Beyond that, I was destroying an ancient castle, a medieval ruin, a contemporary artistic masterpiece. The nest had become doubly meaningful for me: a sign of the intelligence and dignity of the world of birds, and in its deconstructed state a symbol of man's power to destroy. Ironically, I felt richer for the experience. I had entered the mystery a wee bit more.

## RECIPE/ADVERTISEMENT

### Anton's Chocolate Chip Cookie Mix Gift in a Jar

#### Ingredients:

\_ tsp. vanilla powder (available from cake decorating suppliers)  
1 c all purpose flour  
\_ c white sugar (cane, not beet)  
\_ c brown sugar  
1 c chocolate chips  
\_ c brown sugar  
\_ c white sugar (cane, not beet)  
\_ c all purpose flour  
\_ tsp salt (kosher, not iodized)  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp baking powder

#### Directions:

Layer the chocolate chip cookie mix ingredients into a wide-mouth mason jar. Start from the bottom up. Pack each layer into the jar.

Use scissors to cut a 9 inch diameter circle from calico fabric (or use a doily). Place over lid. Tie on a raffia or ribbon bow to secure the fabric. Alternately, shellac a cookie the same size as the lid as an ornament on top of the jar, or cut out old Christmas card circles the same size as the top and place it them between tops and rings. Attach a gift card to the jar with the following mixing and baking directions:

### Anton's Chocolate Chip Cookies

\_ c unsalted butter  
1 egg  
1 Chocolate Chip Mix Gift in a Jar

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Sift dry ingredients through a colander to separate out the chocolate chips from the other ingredients (so you don't smash the chips!). Beat \_ cup of unsalted un-melted butter in a medium bowl. Stir sifted ingredients into butter until well blended. In a small bowl, beat 1 egg. Mix your beaten egg into your butter mixture until blended. Gently stir in chips. Drop 1 teaspoon of batter onto a lightly greased cool cookie sheet. Bake 8 minutes or until browned. Yield: 4 dozen.

From *Anton's Gifts in a Jar*. ISBN: 096661190X available from Amazon.com.

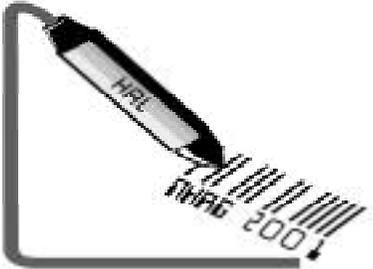
This book contains 200 old-fashioned folk, Amish, and gourmet country handcrafted food gifts and personal luxury recipes that fit in a quart mason jar. These are creative gifts for creative minds! In this book are recipes for soups, salsa, baby items, herbal potions, magic reindeer food, fisherman's soap, flower recipes, aromatherapy, tea, Christmas drinks, bath products, dip, cider, layered mixes for cookies. It is brand new for 2000.

These recipes instruct how to make jars that can be placed in old-fashioned handcrafted cheer baskets. They are great for Mother's Day. The jars make lovely bridal and baby shower prizes. You can top the mason jars with your favorite quilt squares, cross-stitch, doilies, homespun fabric, and ribbons. This book and its projects are a hit during the gift-giving season!

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New Hampshire Mensa  
A GATHERING WITH NO NAME



February 16 - 18, 2001

**Registration:** \$45 to 11/15/00, \$50 to 12/31/00, \$55 to 02/15/01, \$60 at the door. **Do not mail after 02/07/2001.** Children 8 - 17, \$10 less than the regular adult rate, under 8 free. Saturday rate, \$10 less than the regular rate in effect at registration.

**Registrar:** Deb Stone, 24312 Spartan St., Mission Viejo, CA 92691-3921 (949) 770-4890, fax (949) 770-3157 or e-mail debstone@aol.com

**The Party:** Speakers, Games, Friends, Midnight Pool Party, Movie Room & more!

**Meals:** To Be Announced

**T-Shirts:** To Be Announced

**Hotel:** Radisson Hotel Merrimack, 4 Executive Park Drive, Merrimack, NH 03054, Phone (603) 424-8000

**Rates:** \$71 S/D, \$81 T/Q - Be sure to ask for the Mensa rate!

**Rooms blocked until 1/24/01 only!!!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Badge: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ or MC/Visa # \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

For items: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Monthly)

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Please allow four weeks for the change in MENSА Bulletin (the National Magazine) delivery, and eight weeks for the Chronicle. Remember to give your membership number to facilitate this process. (This number appears on your membership card and labels affixed to the Chronicle and MENSА Bulletin.)

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