

# **Southern Connecticut Mensa Chronicle**

## **REMINDER!**

**Mensa yearly memberships expire in APRIL. You should have received your Mensa Membership Renewal Notices in early January 2002. However, you may renew online at [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org) or by calling (817) 607-0060, ext. 199, and using your MasterCard or Visa.**

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SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR APRIL

Wednesday, April 10, 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, [frbill@mags.net](mailto:frbill@mags.net).

Saturday, April 20, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., BRIDGEPORT. Speaker to be announced.

Socializing starts at 7:00, followed by dinner at approximately 8:00. (Directions are available at [www.threedoor.com.directions.htm](http://www.threedoor.com.directions.htm).)

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.

Saturday, April 27, 8:15, THEATRE EVENT: The fast-paced thriller *Dead Man's Hand* plays at the Clockwork Repertory Theatre, 133 Main St., OAKVILLE, CT 06779. Two couples are lured to a remote Italian villa to be murdered, one by one. Who is the murderer and what do the victims have in common? Or is it really murder? Someone knows, but no one is telling. Tickets are \$13. For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959 or e-mail [Jmizera@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmizera@hotmail.com). Try to call before Mon., 4/22 to assure seats.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR MAY

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

Saturday, May 18, 7:00. Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant, 1775 Madison Ave., BRIDGEPORT.

Saturday, May 25, 8:00, THEATRE EVENT: *Jesus Christ Superstar* at the Performing Arts Center, Sacred Heart University, 5151 Park Ave., Fairfield, CT. Musical set in 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. Tickets are \$20. For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959 or e-mail [Jmizera@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmizera@hotmail.com).

Admitted in CT, NY & OR

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**CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS MENSA CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS**

This is not a complete listing. WE - Weekly Event , ME - Monthly Event, YE - Yearly Event

Side note – There is a Floating Jazz SIG that Janine Bujalski is developing. If you'd like to be on her email list, please let her know at JanineB\_CPA@compuserve.com (that's Underscore \_CPA!) We had a delightful night with 12 of us at Szchwan Tokyo in West Hartford on Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>. - Beth Collins, CT & W. Mass Calendar Editor

**APRIL**

**4, 11, 18, 25                      Thursday                      7:00 PM**

**Scrabble** (WE) at Emmanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford. **Ellen Leonard**, (860) 667-1966

**5                                      Friday                                      5:30 - 7:00 PM**

**Happy Hour** (ME, first Friday) at the Ramada Inn, Meriden. **Ann Polanski**, (203) 269-4565. This monthly reunion usually draws 10-20 people, Nov. 2 we had 30! We warmly welcome newcomers, and it's less than a mile from the I-91 and I-691 interchange.

**DIRECTIONS: From I-91 north or south, or Route 15 north or south, take East Main St. (Meriden) exit, head east (away from Meriden Center). After the I-91 interchanges, take a right at the next light. There is a small Ramada sign at the corner. After you pass the Meriden Cinema Complex and the road curves to the left, take a right into the Ramada parking lot. Inside Silver City Grill, ask the host/hostess for the Mensa table - they know us well!**

**10                                      Wednesday                                      6:30 PM**

Speaking of reservations: today is the deadline for reservations for the play Desdemona, Saturday April 20. See listing for details.

**20                                      Saturday                                      7:00 PM**

**Desdemona**. You've heard Othello's side, now hear hers. Paula Vogel's inversion of Shakespeare's tragedy will make you laugh out loud! At Yale Cabaret, 217 Park St., New Haven. \$10/play, \$4/food cover. Offers full table service, desserts & drinks. Opens at 7 p.m. for dinner, 8:30 p.m. curtain. Call **Pauli Gravel** at 203-931-0334 *no later than* April 10 for reservations.

**21                                      Sunday                                      10 AM**

**Connecticut Butterfly Association walk**, BLUFF HEAD, Guilford, all are welcome. For more info 860/526-1993. **Diane Adams**. I'll wear a yellow ribbon in my hair. We may see Falcate Orangetip, Spring Azure, and elfins among the early wildflowers. Meet at the parking lot in the pines where the trail begins. Bring your kids! **Directions:** In North Guilford from Rte. 80 take Rte. 77 north approximately 4 miles to parking area on left just after Great Hill Rd.

**21                                      Sunday                                      1:35 PM**

**Mensa Goes to a Ballgame**. Meet in the New Britain Stadium in section 213 (unreserved grandstand) for an Eastern League baseball game between the New Britain Rock Cats (Minnesota Twins farm club) and the Binghamton Mets. For more info, contact Tom Thomas (413-467-7726 or tom.thomas@the-spa.com) or the Rock Cats (www.rockcats.com)

**24                                      Wednesday                                      Noon**

**Waterbury Last Wednesday** of the Month Lunch (ME) at Maggie McFly's, Rt. 63, Middlebury, **Dick Fogg**, (860) 274-2370.

**26                                      Friday                                      5:00 PM**

**Fourth Friday Happy Hour**, (ME, fourth Friday) Colonial Tymes, 2389 Dixwell Ave Hamden. Located about 1/2 mile north of Exit 60, Wilbur Cross Parkway. We have been able to sit at a nice big table and enjoy the good free food for a few months now. Come on down and join us. We also seem to be going out to dinner after, so if you plan to come and want dinner, too, let us know so we can reserve. **Gail Trowbridge** (203) 877-4472 or Gail.Trowbridge@att.com. I send out an e-mail reminder every month. Let me know if you'd like to be on the list.

## THE MARCH DINNER

At the March Dinner at the Three Door Restaurant in Bridgeport, Jon Blumenfeld from the New England Skeptical Society gave an informative introduction to skepticism. Along the way, he discussed many topics such as epistemology, naturalism in science, the mind/body problem, and means of self-deception in experiments, particularly in testing claims of extra-sensory perception. Through slides, demonstrations, explanation, and discussion, Jon explored these matters and gave the audience an appreciation of the basics of the scientific method.

Mr. Blumenfeld succinctly outlined skepticism starting with its principle that the universe is ultimately predictable and knowable. We have a systematic universe of objective reality that we can study, examine, and experiment with to obtain scientific knowledge. In their investigations, skeptics are guided by the principle of Naturalism that anything we want to talk about in the physical world must be measurable or observable. This standard contrasts with that used in fields like parapsychology, where there is little or nothing you can see. Furthermore, skeptics look only at testable claims, claims that can be falsified by experiments. Skepticism is not interested in non-falsifiable phenomena. The burden of proof is on the people making the claims.

Jon stated at the outset that scientific investigation depends on epistemology, the philosophy of knowledge. Skepticism draws from Cartesian epistemology for its foundations. One point clarified was that Descartes did not ask, "How do you know that you exist?" but rather "How do I know anything?", or "What do I really know for sure?". When Descartes established his existence through the famous argument, "I think, therefore I am", he established the basis for investigation of the world around him. Although we cannot prove that the universe is not just our private dream, it behaves just as if it was real. Even if the world outside of us was unreal, it behaves the way it is supposed to and you can't know the difference. Hence, we can scientifically examine the world.

Although investigation requires observation, Mr. Blumenfeld was careful to note that we can misinterpret evidence in many ways. The eye is not a camera and our memories are not like computer hard drives, simply recording nature. Visual mistakes are induced by hallucinogens, stress, sensory deprivation, a lack of contrast in backgrounds, ambiguous figures, and the tendency to see patterns in chaos. Similarly, memory is a creative process, one that is malleable and can be altered, and like vision, can fill in gaps with preconceived patterns. Our intuitive sense of probability is also very poor and must be checked, for we often are quick to see cause or remarkable coincidences where there is only ordinary randomness.

The night concluded with questions from the audience, and Jon's invitation for people to further explore skepticism by visiting the New England Skeptical Society's website, [www.theness.com](http://www.theness.com), sampling the organization's quarterly newsletter, and attending the local chapter's meetings.

(The New England Skeptical Society is a non-profit organization and membership is \$28 a year).

## WHERE DID THE DOLLAR COME FROM?

The U.S. dollar is the most popular currency in the world today. To many people, there is nothing so American as the dollar but they might be surprised to learn that the dollar actually has rather obscure foreign origins.

The story starts back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in a small corner of the Holy Roman Empire. Nestled in the mountains of Bohemia was a valley called Joachimsthal, or "Saint Joachim's Valley" (now Jáchymov in the western region of the Czech Republic). Joachimsthal belonged to the Schlackenwerth dominion. In 1516, Count Stephan Schlick, who presided over the territory, discovered a very rich silver mine in the valley. The Count founded a mining city and began minting coins there in 1519. The silver in this area was of a special alloy that didn't tarnish. Because of the consistency, and the fineness of the coins, the mint soon flourished. The coins produced were large one-ounce pieces of silver that came to be known as "Joachimthaler", later shortened to "thaler" (pronounced "taaler").

Because of their quality, thalers circulated throughout Europe. The German thaler became the Low German or Dutch daler, the Flemish daelder, the English dollar, and the Levantine talar or talari. Under the reign of Charles V of Austria (1519 - 1556), the territories of the Holy Roman Empire were united with those of Spain, including the Spanish New World possessions, Burgundy, and the Low Countries. Hence, the thaler spread from the Old World to the New World. When the Spaniards discovered rich gold and silver mines in the Americas, Spain became the world's most important producer of coins. In 1535, the first North American mint was built in Mexico City, and in 1572, under King Phillip II, Spain began minting silver coins in Mexico and Peru. These mints borrowed the name thaler for their new coin, the dólar, the Spanish dollar, also sometimes called the peso, or Spanish pillar dollar. (The coin, like the Spanish coat of arms, had the two Pillars of Hercules on the Straits of Gibraltar, pictured on the back, to commemorate Columbus' discovery of new territories beyond the Atlantic for Spain.)

The Spanish silver dollar was trusted but it was often too much for small everyday purchases. Hence, it was stamped in a way so that it could easily be broken into pieces of eight. The pieces were called reales, and since the Spanish Dollar could be broken into bits of eight reales, it took the nickname "pieces of eight" (piastres), or "eight bits". After 1732, Spanish Dollars began to be minted with edge milling and a circular shape, so they were called Spanish Milled Dollars.

In colonial America, many different currencies from different countries were used, with English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German coins predominating. The coins fluctuated in value in different colonies and there was no general standard. The Spanish silver dollar was probably the closest thing to a common currency. It came in by trade across the frontier from Louisiana, which Spain had ceded to France, and from the Spanish territories in the West Indies. It circulated in all the colonies, usually at a value between four and seven shillings. Although the English pound and shilling were desirable to Americans before the Revolution, the British hindered their use by prohibiting anyone coming into the Colonies from bringing along British coins. They also forbade the colonists from coining and later printing their own money. They hoped to force the colonies to trade almost entirely with England, but the Americans circumvented the laws by using commodity

money like tobacco and wampum, bills of exchange obtained from selling American goods to English traders, and foreign currency obtained from French and Spanish traders and pirates.

Because of problems getting British currency, on the eve of the Revolutionary War, the Spanish dollar was the most attractive currency for Americans. In 1775-1776, both John Hancock and Thomas Jefferson proposed to the Continental Congress that the United States adopt the Spanish milled silver dollar as our monetary unit and raise funds in that currency to fight for freedom. The Congress, however, first approached its biggest ally, France, and asked for permission to support the new US currency with the French 'Livres'. France said no. They then turned to the other major American ally, Spain, which agreed to let the US base its monetary system on the Spanish dollar.

To pay for the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress in 1775 authorized the limited issuance of a national currency, a paper currency called the Continental that was denominated in dollars. These Continental dollars are regarded as the first Federal money. Congress promised to pay the holders of this currency with gold, silver, or Spanish coins, but the American government did not actually have nearly enough specie to redeem these notes. They were backed only by the "anticipation" of future tax revenues and could be redeemed only if the colonies won independence.

The Continental dollar proved to be a disaster. Congress intended to raise revenue from voluntary contributions by the states but the states did not make payments for the first two years of the war. Instead, they issued their own unbacked currencies to finance expenditures. With no revenue, Congress simply printed enormous quantities of money to pay for supplies. The British and Loyalists aggravated the problem by printing counterfeit Continentals. Inflation spiraled upwards, with the Continental depreciating to 20% of its nominal value by 1777. The Congress found it extremely difficult to borrow money, and barely managed to keep the military going by getting hard currency and supplies from the French and Spanish, loans from private citizens, and eventually, some requisitions from the states. This still didn't cover the costs of the war, however, so a desperate Congress authorized the army to confiscate supplies, and this is exactly what Washington's forces did. American finances remained precarious throughout the Revolution. Congress tried to force people to accept the Continental dollar at face value by declaring those who would not do so as "traitors". Nonetheless, the Continental continued to fall and by 1781 had declined to 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of its original worth. Soldiers were paid with the currency, but it was so useless that they stuffed their boots with the notes to keep their feet warm. The phrase "Not worth a continental" became a description of anything that was worthless.

Fortunately for the Americans, the British collapsed before American funding did. Since the Continental dollar was a laughingstock and the Americans did not want to use the British pound, the government appointed Thomas Jefferson to find a new currency for the nation. Jefferson once again recommended the Spanish milled dollar, because it was a currency that retained its value and that people readily used. Although the Congress did not adopt the Spanish dollar as a national currency, it remained probably the most popular money in the country.

The American Constitution that replaced the Articles of Confederation granted the

government the power to issue money and banned the states from doing so. The writers of the Constitution, however, did not give the government the power to print paper money as it had done during the Revolution.

Congress, in The Coinage Act of 1792, established the U.S. Mint and made the Dollar the national currency, using the Spanish dollar as the model. This legislation authorized the minting of the first United States of America silver Dollars in 1794, along with other silver and gold coins. The Act also committed the United States to the decimal system for its new currency instead of the clumsy British system.

The Coinage Act gave us the U.S. dollar, but the Spanish dollar continued as legal tender until 1857. Even though the U.S. was now using a decimal system, the Spanish influence also continued in the reference to the quarter as "two bits", a legacy of the pieces of eight of the Spanish dollar. The New York Stock Exchange also continued until recently to quote share prices in eighths of a dollar. The Spanish currency also gave us the dollar sign which the U.S. shares with some Latin currencies, although the exact derivation of this symbol is disputed. Some claim the "\$" comes from the figure "8", for the 8 reales which made up Spanish dollar, plus the "II" pillars from the Pillars of Hercules on the back of the coin. Others claim that the "S" is a banner draped around the pillars. Still, others maintain that the dollar symbol is a joining of the letters "PS" from the abbreviation for the Spanish pesos or piastres. Regardless, the dollar sign, like the dollar itself, has Spanish ancestry.

Today there is an estimated \$500 billion dollars of U.S. currency in circulation and an estimated two-thirds of it is outside the United States, where it is an unofficial currency for trade or a reserve currency for central banks. Some countries, such as Panama and Ecuador, even use the U.S. dollar as their official currency, and a number of troubled Latin American and Eastern European countries have considered dollarization. Ironically, the dollar has come back almost full circle to its Bohemian and Spanish origins.

## Good Wine Cheap (and good food to go with it)

By John Grover

This month we will consider two wines from Spain. You may have noticed that the prices of many of your favorite wines have gone up over the past year or two. Spain remains one of the last refuges of those seeking "good wine cheap". Our selections are a pair of just such inexpensive, quality wines, which we will complement with a dish from the region suggested by my friend and co-worker, Colleen.

The first pick is a red wine from the Navarra region in the North of Spain. This is "Vega Sindoa" 2000, which is produced by the Bodegas Nekeas winery from a blend of 70% Tempranillo and 30% Merlot. Tempranillo is the most widely grown grape in Spain. It has a very deep color, a bright cherry flavor, and substantial tannins and acid that give it a medium body. The less expensive Tempranillos can be a little rough around the edges. This situation is often rectified by blending, frequently done with the Garnacha (Grenache) grape. Our blend is finished nicely with the smoothness and rich, almost jammy, fruit of Merlot. At \$6.99 a bottle, it's a steal.

The second wine is Vina Alarba old vines Grenache, 1999 bottled by Bodegas y Vinedas del Jalon, a winery located in the Calatayud area of the Aragon region in Northern Spain. They state that the vines that bear these grapes are over 50 years old. These mature vines produce a wine of considerable depth and character with an intense plum taste and an almost overwhelming pepper finish. This wine was also \$6.99.

### *Mediterranean Mostaccioli*

Start to Finish: 30 minutes

Four Servings

- 6 ounces dried mostaccioli or gemelli pasta
- \_ medium eggplant, cubed (about 3 cups); mushrooms can be used instead of or in addition to the eggplant
- 2 cups slices zucchini
- 8 ounces ground lamb or beef (or combined); this can be increased up to a pound for the real meat eaters
- 2 14.5 ounce cans diced tomatoes with basil, oregano and garlic
- \_ cup raisins (yes really, this is typical Mediterranean)
- \_ cup snipped fresh basil
- \_ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsps. balsamic vinegar

Feta cheese crumbled

Cook pasta according to package directions, adding eggplant and zucchini the last 2 minutes of cooking. Drain. Keep warm.

Meanwhile, for sauce, in a large skillet cook meat until brown; drain fat. Stir in undrained tomatoes, raisins, basil and cinnamon. Bring to boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring once or twice. Remove from heat; stir in vinegar.

Transfer pasta/vegetable mixture to a warm serving platter. Spoon sauce over pasta mixture. Serve sprinkled with crumbled feta cheese. This dish is an absolute delight.

I hope that you will contact me with your comments about your favorite wines at [jgrover@berk.com](mailto:jgrover@berk.com). I will be happy to share them with the broader Mensa group.

John Grover is a member of Mensa of Northeastern New York. He lives with his wife Sharon in the Hudson Valley in Kinderhook, New York.

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](mailto: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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication, and the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for e-mail submissions.

**NOTED AND QUOTED**

- To do is to be. - Socrates
- To be is to do. - Plato
- Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.  
- Immanuel Kant
- An ounce of action is worth a ton of theory. - Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it.  
- Henry David Thoreau
- I do nothing, granted. But I see the hours pass - which is better than trying to fill them.  
- E.M. Cioran
- Success leaves you stranded - in winner's limbo. - Papa John Creach
- Rivers and roads lead people on. - Georgia O'Keefe
- Sanity is a matter of degree. - Aldous Huxley
- Sometimes I feel like a figment of my own imagination. - Lily Tomlin
- Often we have no time for our friends but all the time in the world for our enemies.  
- Leon Uris
- Revenge has no more quenching effect on emotions than salt water has on thirst.  
- Walter Weckler
- The true function of a writer is to produce a masterpiece and ... no other task is of any consequence.  
- Cyril Connolly
- Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. - Anonymous
- I hear, I forget. I see, I remember. I do, I understand. - Chinese Proverb
- Many people have played themselves to death. Many people have eaten and drunk themselves to death. Nobody ever thought himself to death. - Gilbert Highet
- Keep high aspirations, moderate expectations, and small needs. - Herbert Stein
- Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can. - John Wesley
- I don't love humanity. I don't hate them either. I just don't know them personally.  
- Alan Arkin

REPORT FROM MENSA REGIONAL VICE-CHAIRMAN  
BETSY BURKE

Are you planning ahead for some getaways? For May try going to Cape Cod from May 10-12 for Boston Mensa's Cape Cod gathering. Room rates are only \$59.95 and registration is \$40. Send your hotel money in quickly to The Corsair and Cross Rip Oceanfront Motels, 41 Chase Avenue, Dennisport, MA 02639. Contact Registrar Susan Mozzicato at 19 Chesley Road, Newton Centre, MA, 02459 and let her know you're going to attend.

Central New York Mensa is joining with Mensa of the Southern Tier to hold a joint RG from August 16-18 in Ithaca New York. If you get your registration in prior to May 16 the cost is only \$35 and that includes 3 meals! Send money to the registrar, Marie Ten Brink, at 206 Church Street, North Syracuse, NY 13212. The hotel is the Best Western at 1020 Ellis Hollow Road, East Hill Plaza, Ithaca, NY 14850. Room rates are \$89 per night.

At the March AMC meeting it was agreed that there would be an increase in money returned to local groups. Sallie Banko – RVC 2, Dan Wilterding –RVC 6, and myself all attended the February budget committee meeting and pressed for this issue to be addressed.

I'm also glad to report that membership is increasing. As of March 30<sup>th</sup> the total membership equaled 49,811. We're so close to 50,000! It's interesting to note that many of the new members are younger. I'll be able to give exact figures next month once all the data is in on renewals. Much of the growth can be attributed to our web site at [us.mensa.org](http://us.mensa.org). If you haven't checked out this site lately, do so. It has some extra material that you don't see in the Bulletin.

## **CHAPTER NOTES**

*Southern Connecticut Mensa has an e-mail server list on Topica where members can discuss topics with other Mensans on the list. To subscribe, just send a blank e-mail to: MensaSCT- subscribe@topica.com*

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**BETHEL CINEMA FILM GROUP.** The Bethel Cinema is an independent art house movie theater in the town of Bethel, CT, just outside Danbury. The Cinema will be running a Freudian Flicks psychological-film discussion group from now until May or June. Meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month at 11:00 am. (Bethel Cinema 778-2100). If you are interested in participating in a Mensa group to see films in this series or any of the films on the theater's regular schedule, please contact Nancy O'Neil at [Nancyoneil@aol.com](mailto:Nancyoneil@aol.com).

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*If you would like to organize or sponsor a Mensa event, please contact Jim Mizera at [Jmizera@hotmail.com](mailto:Jmizera@hotmail.com). The event can be posted in the Chronicle and announced at monthly dinners. It can also be listed in the newsletter of the Connecticut and Western Massachusetts Mensa chapter, the Media, if enough lead-time is available.*

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**ADVERTISEMENTS**

*The Four Corners SIG Presents*

## The Litchfield Hills Book Safari

*Saturday, June 8*

Come join us in exploring four unique antiquarian bookstores tucked away in the beautiful New England countryside. We'll meet for a quick lunch in New Milford, CT, then head north to New Preston, Litchfield, and West Cornwall, before ending up in Kent for a relaxing dinner. Join us for the entire trip, or meet us along the way. Book prices will range from 50¢ paperbacks to rare, antique tomes in the thousands.

For more information and a copy of the itinerary, contact Merrill at 860-355-8699 or [merrill@worldnet.att.net](mailto:merrill@worldnet.att.net).

*The Four Corners SIG is a multi-chapter special interest group dedicated to sponsoring events in Litchfield County, CT; Fairfield County, CT; Putnam County, NY; and Dutchess County, NY.*

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**Wanted:** Child who loves science as much as Willy! Our son Willy, 7 years old, loves science. There's lots of it he understands on a college level. We're looking for other kids with similar interests/abilities to hang out and pretend they're subatomic particles or invent new viruses (not the computer kind!). You can reach Willy's parents (Lisa and Steve) at: [lsawin@optonline.net](mailto:lsawin@optonline.net) or (203) 335-4389

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**In Don't Forget to Write!, The 6' Ferret Writers' Group** shares more than ten years' experience on how to start a local writers' group, add members, and avoid common problems. Also included are writing exercises, events, recommended reading, and stories from a few exercises. Order through your favorite on-line or local bookstore. ISBN 0-7388-3698-2

Visit our website, too! [http://pages.cthome.net/6ft\\_ferrets/](http://pages.cthome.net/6ft_ferrets/)

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**Advertising Rates.** Short classified ads free to Mensa members and subscribers, \$2.00 per month and \$20.00 per year for others. Send copy to the editor. Display ads: Full page, \$50; half page, \$30; quarter page or business card, \$15. Discounts: 10% for three issues, 20% for six issues, 30% for 12 issues. All ads must be paid in advance, checks payable to Southern Connecticut Mensa.

**MENSA REGIONAL GATHERINGS****Mind Games 2002 April 19 - 21 Minneapolis, Minnesota**

American Mensa's 13th annual Mind Games competition will showcase some of the newest and best board and card games designed by game manufacturers and inventors this year. The Games will be held Friday - Sunday, April 19-21 in Brooklyn Park, Minn. The event attracts between 125 and 165 Mensans, who play and judge as many as 60 games during the weekend.

Through this event, our members - some of the country's most avid game players - judge new games on the U.S. market. The new games are judged on five criteria, and the top five point-getting games receive the Mensa Select® seal. This coveted designation has been granted to only 60 games in American Mensa's history. Past winners include Taboo™, Scattergories®, Trivial Pursuit (Genus edition), Magic-The Gathering™, Rush Hour™, Apples to Apples™, Clue/the Great Museum Caper, Inklings, thepollgame, and Brainstrain.

"This is one of the most enjoyable weekends a Mensan can have," said Don Pendley, AML development officer. "The weekend combines the best elements of being a Mensan -- mind-challenging games, food (especially chocolate), and the opportunity to use our brain power."

Registration for the event is \$55. To get registration info, check out the Mensa web site at [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org).

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**Son of Asilomar**

August 30-September 2 *The Cliffs* – Shell Beach, Calif.

Dolphins, private balconies, the beach – relax, no hills to climb! Heir to the 36-year Asilomar tradition; Mensa at its best. Casino, Ball, pool party, The Hunt, Sci-Fi, exciting new events, 5-star buffet meals. Theme: Myths & Legends. Hotel/MP/Reg. Complete: 3 days \$389-\$525 to 8/1. Singles, Upgrades, DT available. At the famous -The Cliffs at Shell Beach. *S H DT H/AS \$0*. Registration handled exclusively by RG registrar, Bev Miller, 20365 Valerio St., Winnetka, CA 91306; 818-883-9708; beversaurus@cs.com. CC or checks to: Mensa Son of Asilomar. RG Web site: [www.mensaasilomar.org](http://www.mensaasilomar.org).

**2001 MENSA SELECT SEAL WINNING GAMES****Brainstrain** by Chuckle Games Company

A unique game where players make up the words! You've got 60 seconds to ask questions fast to determine who, what, or where you are. Can't guess? We'll clue you!

Price: \$29.95

Web site: [www.chucklegames.com](http://www.chucklegames.com)

**DAO** by playdao.com

The game consists of only one simple rule and four ways to win... an engaging game of strategy, yet fun for the whole family! A real challenge for players of all ages that requires an ever-changing strategy and precise balance of movement.

Price: \$39.95

Web site: [www.playdao.com](http://www.playdao.com)

**Metro (Paris, 1898)** by Queen/Funagain Games

Engineer the most extensive network of track in the Paris underground while attempting to cut off your opponents' tracks. Play with 2 players for a brain-busting tactical duel, 3-4 players for a balanced strategic challenge, or with 5-6 players for chaotic fun!

Price: \$29.95

Web site: [www.funagain.com](http://www.funagain.com)

**Shapes Up!** By Educational Insights

A game of strategy and speed! Players fit shapes together, like a tangram, to cover their boards and form multicolored squares. The player whose board is filled first and yells "Shapes Up!" is the winner.

Price: \$19.95

Web site: [www.educationalinsights.com](http://www.educationalinsights.com)

**thepolicegame** by thepollgame, LLC

Choose from 750 "Yes" or "No" questions or create one. The object is to guess how many players will answer "Yes" to the question. Surprising answers and revealing stories will entertain for hours.

Price: \$34.95

Web site: [www.thepollgame.com](http://www.thepollgame.com)



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