

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA CHRONICLE

If you or someone you know would like to be a speaker at our monthly dinner, please contact Activities Coordinator Nancy O'Neil at NancyOneil@aol.com or 203-791-1668. The dinner is held the third Saturday of the month.

Membership Renewal: If you have an annual Mensa membership, your membership will be expiring at the end of April. You should have received a renewal notice in the mail in January. You can return that form or visit www.us.mensa.org to renew.

ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE CHRONICLE

going back to 2000 are available on the Internet at <http://www.solarandthermal.com/mensa>. You can download the latest e-mail version of the Chronicle there, as well as previous issues. All issues are in read-only Adobe Acrobat format so there is no chance of viruses accompanying the files.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Schedule of Southern Connecticut Mensa Events
Schedule of Connecticut and Western Mass Mensa Events
Happy Hours & Get Together's
- 4 Regional Gatherings
- 5 Word Origins
- 6 From The Vice Chairman
- 7 Puzzles and Questions
- 8 Noted and Quoted
- 9 Ruminations
- 11 Kick Irrational Comics
- 12 Good Wine Cheap
- 13 January Dinner:
The Guns that Won the West
- 14 Mind and Money
- 15 Poetry Corner
- 16 Mental Matters
- 17 Book Review
- 18 Chapter Notes
Member Advertisements
Change of Address Form
- 19 List of Officers



SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

Saturday, Feb. 5, 11:30 a.m.

MENSA Movie Event.

at the Avon Theatre in downtown Stamford.
DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS - This vastly underrated piece of film noir from writer/director Carl Franklin (One False Move) features Hotel Rwanda's Don Cheadle in a scene stealing supporting role. (If you saved your ticket stub from Hotel Rwanda, show it for free admission!) Contact Catherine Schwartz at rin@optonline.net or (203) 221-0762 for details.

Friday, February 11, 7:00

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner

Monthly dinner 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, frbill@mags.net.

Saturday, February 19, 7:00.

Monthly Dinner

Susan Graybill will discuss the book and the movie To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Mrs. Graybill has taught this book in English classes and helped bring Philip Alford and Mary Badham, two young actors in the film, to the area to participate in discussions in libraries and schools. Come hear this interesting talk and enjoy dinner in our private dining room at the Stony Hill Inn, 46 Stony Hill Road (right off Exit 8 on Rte. 84), Bethel, CT 06801, (203-743-5533). Dress is casual. Contact Nancy O'Neil, Nancyoneil@aol.com, 203-791-1668, for information and reservations. You MUST call and MAKE RESERVATIONS by Friday, February 18 so we can assure that the restaurant can provide seating. If you make reservations and can't attend, PLEASE call and cancel.

Directions from New Haven or Bridgeport: Take Route 25 into Newtown, where it becomes Route 6 West.

OR take I-84 and get off at Exit 9 (Route 25 Brookfield). At the end of the ramp take a left if eastbound or a right if westbound. At the first light take a right on to Route 6 West. The hotel is located 2 miles on the right, not far over the Bethel line. From Stamford/Norwalk: Take Route 7 to I-84 and follow the above directions, turning right after exiting I-84.

Saturday, February 26, 8:00.

Theater Event: George Orwell's Animal Farm

performed by the Branford Renaissance Theater Company Actor's Ensemble at Fellowship Hall, 45 Tabor Drive, Branford, CT (www.actorsensemble.com). Tickets are \$12.00. Contact Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959, jmizera@hotmail.com, for info or reservations.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR MARCH

Friday, March 11, 7:00.

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.

See above listing for details.

Saturday, March 19, 7:00.

Monthly Dinner.

See above listing for details.

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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 CT & W. Mass Calendar Editor Gisela Rodriguez, (860) 872-3106, email: lilith@snet.net.

If you wish to comment on articles or 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 e-mail address or 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.

Mensans on the Radio:

C&WM Mensan Janine Bujalski is on the airwaves every 1st & 3rd Friday 6-10 a.m. on 89.5FM, WPKN in Bridgeport, CT. There is a limited internet broadcast - about 25 can listen simultaneously at www.wpkn.org. From 6-9 AM there's jazz, blues & music from Brazil and from 9-10 AM the music is from Louisiana, mostly Cajun & zydeco.

Vice LocSec Will Mackey is hosting Friday evening Classics from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. weekly on 91.3 FM, WWUH, in West Hartford. The name of the program is "What You Will" and its focus is chamber music.

FEBRUARY

3, 10, 17, 24 Thursdays 7:00 pm

Scrabble (WE) at Emmanuel Synagogue, 160 Mohegan Drive, West Hartford. Ellen Leonard, (860) 667-1966 (Please call first to make sure this is happening today).

4 Friday 5:30 pm

Happy Hour in Wallingford (ME, 1st Fridays) Ann Polanski (contact her at 203-269-4565 or ann.polanski@rfsworld.com) hosts us at George's II Restaurant, 950 Yale Avenue, Wallingford, CT 06492 Phone: 269-1059 Directions: Exit 66 off Wilbur Cross Parkway. Turn left (south) onto Rte 5. Take first left onto Yale Avenue. George's II is in the Yale Plaza on the right.

12 Saturday 7:30 - 11:00 pm

Beth and Charlie's 10th Happy Hearts Party! (YE, Wallingford) Join us if you have a heart and want to make it happier. Wear something red (we won't check). Bring something to eat / drink. Please RSVP - player.piano@juno.com or 203-294-0503 to leave a message. Call 203-294-1994 the day of the party.



18 Friday 6pm - 8pm or so

Diner Dinner (ME, 3rd Friday) at Olympia Diner, Rte 5, Newington, just north of the Berlin town line and North East Utilities. Menu ranges from toasted cheese sandwich to steak and fish dinners. Basic bar menu available, no happy hour prices, but the food is good and very reasonable. Please contact Nicole Michaud at (860) 434-7329 or email nirimi@snet.net, Subject: Diner Dinner

23 Wednesday 12 Noon

Middlebury Lunch (ME, last Wednesday) at Maggie McFly's in Middlebury, visible on the right from Rte. 63 just south of the Rte 63 and Rte 64 intersection. This intersection is at the end of a long ramp at Exit 17 on Rte 84 west. From this exit, turn left at the 63/64 intersection. If you use Exit 17 on Rte. 84 east (heading toward Hartford), turn left off the exit ramp and see Maggie McFly's on your left. Contact Richard Fogg at 860-274-2370 for more info.

25 Friday 5:00 pm

Happy Hour (ME, 4th Friday) Colonial Tymes, 2389 Dixwell Ave, Hamden. Located about 1/2 mile north of Exit 60, Wilbur Cross Parkway. We are now reserving the middle tables on the left as you walk in the bar. Dinner is a possibility if enough people are interested. Come on down and join us this month, we'd love to see ya. Contact Gail Trowbridge (203) 877-4472 or Gail.Trowbridge@att.net.

27 Sunday 5:15 pm

Theater event: Harvey

The roving theater loving troupe does it again! Join us for a late afternoon (5:15 pm) performance at the New Britain Repertory Theatre on Norden St. As usual, we will meet for a late lunch / early dinner before the performance. Although it is on a Sunday, the performance should end by 7:30 or so, plenty of time to get home early. As you might recall, Harvey is the hilarious comedy about the invisible six foot rabbit. Written by Mary Chase, this play is both light-hearted and intriguing. Tickets are only \$15 or \$12 for seniors. RSVP to Barb Holstein at BarbCPA@att.net or 860-632-7873. I must receive your payment by Feb. 7th. If we get enough attendees to qualify for a group rate, I'll refund some of your money the day of the performance.

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

February 5 -13

THE SKI SIG OF AMERICAN MENSA

invites Mensa members worldwide to join us for a half-week or week+ of snow skiing the deep fluffy snow on the Rocky Mountains of Aspen and Snowmass. For details see [Http://lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/skisig-announce](http://lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/skisig-announce) or contact John Adams, rip2005@skisig.us.mensa.org, +1 713 666 9277, 8211 Fairhope Place, Houston, TX 77025-3201, USA.

February 18th-20th

GRANITE GATHERING 2005**Phant-M : The Music of the Night**

Please join us in New England for NH Mensa's 15th Annual Regional Gathering! We'll have plenty of food, drink and revelry! Meet new and old friends alike on the top floor of the Radisson Hotel, with a lovely view of the city below. We have a great speaker line-up, as well as games, contests, and surprises spread throughout the weekend. It'll be held FEBRUARY 18-20th at the Center of NH, Manchester NH and the theme will be Phant-M : The Music of the Night. Bring a little intrigue and mystery to your weekend and come up to Northern New England for a great time! We'll have all the usual trappings (great beer and wine selection, games, book sale, auction, chocolate, speakers, children's program) as well as the unusual (you'll just have to come to find out, now won't you?). Please check the website at <http://nh.us.mensa.org/rgnews.shtm> for more details or to download a registration form. Hope to see you there!

FULL SATURDAY NIGHT BBQ BUFFET INCLUDED IN REGISTRATION COST THIS YEAR!!!!

Hotel information: Radisson Hotel Manchester at the Center of NH, 700 Elm Street, Manchester, NH 03101. Single/Double/Triple/Quad \$92. Rates guaranteed until 1/27/04. Call 1-800-333-3333 or 1-603-625-1000 and ask for "NH Mensa" rate.

Registration: \$75 after 1/15 or at the door. **Do not mail registration after 2/1 - please register at the door instead.** Children 8-17 \$15 less than the regular rate, children under 8 free. Saturday rate is \$10 less than the regular rate in effect at registration. Make your checks payable to "NH Mensa" and mail your form and fee to: Deb Stone, Registrar 24312 Spartan Street.

Questions? Contact rgchair@nh.us.mensa.org Mission Viejo, CA 92691-3921 or Walter (603-436-7250) or Darlene (603-529-4446) e-mail: debstone@cox.net

February 27

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY MIDWINTER BLAHS PARTY

Fairfield Inn by Marriott
850 Paterson Plank Road
East Rutherford, NJ 07073-2130
Phone: (201) 507-5222

It was such a success last year we're doing it again! Join your fellow Mensans for an entertaining and educational day. Speakers, games, puzzles, and music. Food, coffee, tea, sodas and LOTS OF CHOCOLATE! Prizes!

Open to Mensans and Non-Mensans of all ages
EASY ACCESS. PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM NYC.
REGISTRATION:

Please send check payable to NNJ Mensa for \$5.00 to: NNJ Mensa - Registration, PO Box 64, Hawthorne, NJ 07507. Please include your Mensa ID, Name, Address, Phone number, and (if available) e-mail address For more information, please contact: Nancy Pool (973) 989-8709, nep@sprynet.com or Mindy Maidens (201) 224-0453, mmaidens@rcn.com

April 8-10

STATEN ISLAND RG

STATEN ISLAND, NY The New York experience and free parking.

Registration \$45 to 1/31; \$50 to 2/28; \$55 post-marked before 3/31; \$60 after.
Saturday night banquet: \$42.

Staten Island Hotel
(71) 698-5000 SR/DR/TR/QR \$110

Checks payable to NYRG.
Registrar: Karen-Coopersmith-Tobin, 20 Wisteria Court, Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852 (732) 438-006. IlanasMom@aol.com

continued on next page

April 15-17

MIND GAMES 2005

HOSTED BY TAMPA BAY MENSA

An intense weekend of play. Mensans judge and critique games released in the past year and award the coveted Mensa Select seal to the top five. Past winners include Scattergories, Trivial Pursuit, and Taboo. Mind Games begins on Friday afternoon and ends Saturday morning.

Double Tree Hotel - Tampa Westshore Airport
4500 W Cypress St., Tampa, FL 33607, (813) 879-4800. Mention MENSA to get a special hotel rate of \$99 per night (plus tax). The cut-off date for getting the special Mensa rate is March 15, 2005.

REGISTRATION through April 1 = \$65. Contacts:
Sylvia Zadorozny, Mind Games 2005
Chair: MGChair@mindgames.us.mensa.org
Kathy Crum: AsstMGChair@mindgames.us.mensa.org

Registration: Registration@mindgames.us.mensa.org
Register online now at mindgames.us.mensa.org!

Send your registration to:

Mind Games 2005, American Mensa, Ltd., 1229
Corporate Dr. W., Arlington, TX 76006-6103

You can also call 817-607-0060 x122 using your
Visa or MasterCard.

Please direct registration questions to
Registration@mindgames.us.mensa.org

2005 Post-AG Cruise

The 2005 Annual Gathering in New Orleans will end with a Mensa cruise to Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Cozumel. Extra-special pricing until August 5, 2004. Details at <http://www.suitecruising.com/ag2.htm>

WORD ORIGINS

When you watch the Super Bowl on February 6, you'll hear many of the common football terms. But most football fans have no idea how some of these phrases started. Here are a few with forgotten origins.

Quarterback, halfback, and fullback - Back in the 1890's, the team on the offensive lined up a little differently than they do today. They had seven men in front on the line - three men on each side of the center, who hiked the ball. In back of them were four players - the backfield. One backfielder stood just a few steps behind the center. A few feet back, two players flanked him. One last man stood further back still, directly in line with the center. This player, because he stood fully back from the center, became known as the fullback. The two players who stood a little further up were about half the distance to the fullback and so they were called halfbacks. Finally, the man in front of them was about a quarter of the distance to the fullback and so took the name quarterback.

Red dog - Normally, only the defensive players who are right on the front line rush the quarterback. But when other defensive players such as linebackers or defensive backs surprise the offense by rushing through at the snap of the ball to try and nail the quarterback, it's called red dogging. Originally, however, the term was a little more limited. The great coach Clark Shaughnessy created a color code to signal some defensive plays. The red signal meant one of the linebackers or defensive backs was to rush in and "dog" or hound the quarterback. The blue signal meant two of these players were to do so, and the green signal, three players. However, today, red dogging is used to mean any surprise blitz of the quarterback.



FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Marghretta McBean

The last days of 2004 were busy ones for me, spent with Mensans near and far. Traveling north to Binghamton, I was met at the bus depot by Mary Jo Kelleher, the President of Mensa of the Southern Tier (MOST). As we drove to Bainbridge ("The Home of Elmer's Glue"), we passed the swollen banks of the Susquehanna River. Treetops, bases submerged in the river, rose out of the misty banks, looking like a dream scene. I met several members of eastern MOST at their monthly lunch, one of whom is a microbiologist turned blacksmith, whose wrought iron pieces have been commissioned by the Cooperstown Museum. Mary Jo, who is also Region 1's Scholarship Chair, presented Certificates of Appreciation to several of the attendees, one of whom (Carole Beach) has been the organizer of this lunch for over eighteen years.

The next day found me celebrating Greater New York Mensa's 40th Birthday. Proclamations from Mayor Bloomberg (New York City), and the Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland County Executives were on display. Brenda Giammanco, GNYM's President, James Wolin, GNYM's Past President and Lenore Friedman, GNYM's wonderful Hospitality Chair are to be commended for the excellent party that they gave! Specially labeled demi-bottles of bubbly were given to the partygoers, and the popping corks added to the festivities.

The next weekend, I was up north once again, but this time across the border in Burlington, Vermont. A "warm spell" kept temperatures in the low 20's (F.), making outdoors walking pleasant. Reviving a long-standing Vermont Mensa tradition, I hosted a holiday get-together. I was pleased to meet about a dozen Mensans, including Brian Lerich, VM's past president, and Jeane Thompson, the VerMonter editor. Ironically, no one from Burlington was present, yet some attendees had driven over two hours to attend. Having seen a Brazilian flag outside a restaurant during my afternoon walk, I suggested to the group that we adjourn there for dinner. What a wonderful evening! The Souza Churrascaria kept the comestibles coming non-stop, and we Mensans kept the conversation going non-stop.

I sincerely hope that enough Vermonters care

enough about their group to keep it self-sustaining. According to Mensa's bylaws, a group must have a Local Secretary (President). While I have been acting as a temporary president for the group, this is not a permanent solution. There is increasing pressure from the national office for me as Regional Vice Chair (RVC) to disband Vermont Mensa. There are those who feel that small groups (under 100 members) are practically incapable of self-sufficiency, and that the best solution is to disband them and absorb their members into larger neighboring groups, often without the consent of these "next door neighbors". To me, this does not solve the problem. It just creates large or huge geographic groups that are difficult to administer, with members who feel even more isolated. Perhaps the time has come to rethink the necessity of a local group: many Mensans have little or no interest in local activities, which the 5-10% (on average) attendance rates bear out.

The recent tsunami disaster had a personal note for me. A wonderful Indonesian woman I know lost her entire family and village. She missed the devastation due to an overzealous airport security check, which caused her to miss her flight. In happier times, she would cook huge banquets of vegetarian foods that even hard-core carnivores devoured. Tempeh, a fermented soybean product with a meaty texture, originated in Indonesia and is available in health food stores and many supermarkets. It's high in protein and low in calories.

SPICY CITRUS BROILED TEMPEH

8 ounces plain or multi-grain tempeh

1/2 cup orange juice

1/4 cup lime juice

1 Tbl. orange zest

1 Tbl. lime zest

1 tsp. olive oil

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4-1/2 tsp. each ground cumin & red pepper flakes

1. Cut tempeh into inch-wide strips. Place in non-reactive baking dish.
2. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over the tempeh.
3. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 2 to 24 hours.
4. Preheat broiler. Broil about 15 minutes, until browned and firm, basting occasionally.
5. Serve with rice and kecep (a sweet soy sauce).

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

(Answers may be in next month's Chronicle.)

1. What new trends have you noticed lately? Which ones are just your imagination?
2. Estimate how fragmented your computer's memory is now.
3. What is the population density of Connecticut? Of the United States?
4. In the stock market, how long do the average bull markets and bear markets last?
5. What percentage of their shots did National Basketball Association players make last year?
6. Estimate how much you spent last year. How close was your estimate?
7. What new tools would you like to see invented?
8. Name as many kinds of detective plots as you can.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

1. What is the difference between the odds of something happening and the probability of it happening?

A: The probability of an event is the ratio of the number of ways it can happen to the total number of chances possible. Odds are the number of chances for (or against) the event versus the number of chances against (or for) it. So the probability of rolling a six on one roll of the die is 1/6, but the odds are 5 to 1 against rolling the six, or 1 to 5 in favor of you rolling the six.

2. Name several of the leading economic indicators.

A: The Index of Leading Economic Indicators is a composite of 11 economic measurements compiled by the Conference Board. These measures are regarded as signs of how the economy will do 6 - 9 months in the future. The components are: average work week, unemployment claims, orders for consumer goods, slower deliveries, plant and equipment orders, building permits, durable-order backlog, materials prices, stock prices, M2 money supply, and consumer expectations.

The Index of Coincident Economic Indicators is composed of 4 measurements that indicate how the economy is doing now. They are: (1) the number of employees on nonagricultural payrolls, (2) industrial production, (3) real personal income (after subtracting transfer payments), and (4) real manufacturing and trade sales.

The Index of Lagging Economic Indicators is a composite index of six indicators that lag the economy - they follow after changes in the business cycle. They include the unemployment rate, business spending, unit-labor costs, bank-loans outstanding, bank interest rates, and book value of manufacturing and trade inventories.

The Commerce Department publishes these indexes and the economic indicators near the end of the month, though many of the indicators may have been compiled and reported before then.

7. Estimate the number of computers in the world.

A: There are estimated to be 500 million computers in the world.

NOTED AND QUOTED

I am always at a loss to know how much to believe of my own stories.

- *Washington Irving, (1783 - 1859), Tales of a Traveller*

Life's short span forbids us to embark on far-reaching hopes.

- *Horace, (65 - 8 B.C.E.), Odes I.4*

We are condemned to kill time: Thus we die bit by bit.

- *Octavio Paz, (1914 - 1998), Cuento de los Jardines*

Establishing goals is all right if you don't let them deprive you of interesting detours.

- *Doug Larson, United Features Syndicate*

The only person you should ever compete with is yourself. You can't hope for a fairer match.

- *Todd Ruthman*

We are only young once. That is all society can stand.

- *Bob Bowen*

To have lost your reputation is to be dead among the living.

- *S.H. Simmons*

Always put off until tomorrow what you shouldn't do at all.

- *Morris Mandel*

It is wise to remember that you are one of those who can be fooled some of the time.

- *Laurence J. Peter, (1919 - 1988), Peter's Almanac*

The punishment for vanity is flattery.

- *Wilhelm Raabe, (1831 - 1910), German novelist*

I can do only one thing at a time, but I can avoid doing many things simultaneously.

- *Ashleigh Brilliant, (1933-), UC Berkeley 'street' philosopher*

The best way to break a habit is to drop it.

- *Leo Aikman, American writer/editor*

Few wishes come true by themselves.

- *June Smith, Orlando Sentinel*

What good are brains to a man? They only unsettle him.

- *P.G. Wodehouse, (1881 - 1975), The Adventures of Sally*

Meanwhile, Time is flying - flying, never to return.

- *Virgil, (70 - 19 B.C.), Georgics*

If you really want to keep a secret you don't need any help.

- *O.A. Carping*

To err is human; to refrain from laughing, humane.

- *Lane Olinghouse*

The sky is the daily bread of the eyes.

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson, (1803 - 1882)*

No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn.

- *Hal Borland, (1900 - 1978), Sundial of the Seasons*

THE READING EDGE - WHAT'S YOUR READING SPEED?

Do you know what your reading speed is? There is an online test that can give you a quick estimate. The Reading Edge, a Wallingford, CT company, has a test at their website www.the-reading-edge.com. The tests take only a minute and calculate your reading speed instantly. For a more comprehensive test, the company a free demo that you can download that will test not only your speed but also your comprehension. The software can be set for different grade levels to test children as well as adults.

The company reports that the average person reads at a speed of between 200-300 words a minute but that people who enjoy reading can read more than 400 words per minute, and that some people can even read well at more than 800 words a minute.

The Reading Edge also offers books, tapes, tele-classes, and personal lessons to help people read faster and more efficiently. For more information, visit their website at www.the-reading-edge.com or contact them at info@the-reading-edge.com

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RUMINATIONS

ON IGNORANCE

by Hilaire Belloc, (1870-1953)

THERE is not anything that can so suddenly flood the mind with shame as the conviction of ignorance, yet we are all ignorant of nearly everything there is to be known. Is it not wonderful, then, that we should be so sensitive upon the discovery of a fault which must of necessity be common to all, and that in its highest degree? The conviction of ignorance would not shame us thus if it were not for the public appreciation of our failure.

If a man proves us ignorant of German or the complicated order of English titles, or the rules of Bridge, or any other matter, we do not care for his proofs, so that we are alone with him: first because we can easily deny them all, and continue to wallow in our ignorance without fear, and secondly, because we can always counter with something we know, and that he knows nothing of, such as the Creed, or the history of Little Bukleton, or some favourite book. Then, again, if one is alone with one's opponent, it is quite easy to pretend that the subject on which one has shown ignorance is unimportant, peculiar, pedantic, hole in the corner, and this can be brazened out even about Greek or Latin. Or, again, one can turn the laugh against him, saying that he has just been cramming up the matter, and that he is airing his knowledge; or one can begin making jokes about him till he grows angry, and so forth. There is no necessity to be ashamed.

But if there be others present? Ah! *Hoc est aliud rem*, that is another matter, for then the biting shame of ignorance suddenly displayed conquers and bewilders us. We have no defence left. We are at the mercy of the discoverer, we own and confess, and become insignificant: we slink away.

Note that all this depends upon what the audience conceive ignorance to be. It is very certain that if a man should betray in some cheap club that he did not know how to ride a horse, he would be broken down and lost, and similarly, if you are in a country house among the rich you are shipwrecked unless you can show acquaintance with the Press, and among the poor you must be very careful, not only to wear good cloth

and to talk gently as though you owned them, but also to know all about the rich. Among very young men to seem ignorant of vice is the ruin of you, and you had better not have been born than appear doubtful of the effects of strong drink when you are in the company of Patriots. There was a man who died of shame this very year in a village of Savoy because he did not know the name of the King reigning over France to-day, and it is a common thing to see men utterly cast down in the bar-rooms off the Strand because they cannot correctly recite the opening words of "Boys of the Empire." There are schoolgirls who fall ill and pine away because they are shown to have misplaced the name of Dagobert III in the list of Merovingian Monarchs, and quite fearless men will blush if they are found ignoring the family name of some peer. Indeed, there is nothing so contemptible or insignificant but that in some society or other it is required to be known, and that the ignorance of it may not at any moment cover one with confusion. Nevertheless we should not on that account attempt to learn everything there is to know (for that is manifestly impossible), nor even to learn everything that is known, for that would soon prove a tedious and heart-breaking task; we should rather study the means to be employed for warding off those sudden and public convictions of Ignorance which are the ruin of so many.

These methods of defence are very numerous and are for the most part easy of acquirement. The most powerful of them by far (but the most dangerous) is to fly into a passion and marvel how anyone can be such a fool as to pay attention to wretched trifles. "Powerful," because it appeals to that strongest of all passions in men by which they are predisposed to cringe before what they think to be a superior station in society. "Dangerous," because if it fail in its objects this method does not save you from pain, and secures you in addition a bad quarrel, and perhaps a heavy beating. Still it has many votaries, and is more often carried off than any other. Thus, if in Bedfordshire, someone catches you erring on a matter of crops, you profess that in London such things are thought mere rubbish and despised; or again, in the society of professors at the Universities, an ignorance of letters can easily be turned by an allusion to that vapid life of the rich, where letters grow insignificant; so at sea, if you slip on common terms, speak a little of your luxurious occu-

ON IGNORANCE cont.

pations on land and you will usually be safe.

There are other and better defences. One of these is to turn the attack by showing great knowledge on a cognate point, or by remembering that the knowledge your opponent boasts has been somewhere contradicted by an authority. Thus, if some day a friend should say, as continually happens in a London club:

"Come, let us hear you decline [Greek: *tetummenos on*]," you can answer carelessly:

"You know as well as I do that the form is purely Paradigmatic: it is never found."

Or again, if you put the Wrekin by an error into Staffordshire, you can say, "I was thinking of the Jurassic formation which is the basis of the formation of----" etc. Or, "Well, Shrewsbury ... Staffordshire?... Oh! I had got my mind mixed up with the graves of the Staffords." Very few people will dispute this, none will follow it. There is indeed this difficulty attached to such a method, that it needs the knowledge of a good many things, and a ready imagination and a stiff face: but it is a good way.

Yet another way is to cover your retreat with buffoonery, pretending to be ignorant of the most ordinary things, so as to seem to have been playing the fool only when you made your first error. There is a special form of this method which has always seemed to me the most excellent by far of all known ways of escape. It is to show a steady and crass ignorance of very nearly everything that can be mentioned, and with all this to keep a steady mouth, a determined eye, and (this is essential) to show by a hundred allusions that you have on your own ground an excellent store of knowledge.

This is the true offensive-defensive in this kind of assault, and therefore the perfection of tactics.

Thus if one should say: "Well, it was the old story. [Greek: *Anankae*]."

It might happen to anyone to answer: "I never read the play."

This you will think perhaps an irremediable fall,

but it is not, as will appear from this dialogue, in which the method is developed:

SAPIENS. But, Good Heavens, it isn't a play!

IGNORAMUS. Of course not. I know that as well as you, but the character of [Greek: *Anankae*] dominates the play. You won't deny that?

SAPIENS. You don't seem to have much acquaintance with Liddell and Scott.

IGNORAMUS. I didn't know there was anyone called Liddell in it, but I knew Scott intimately, both before and after he succeeded to the estate.

SAPIENS. But I mean the dictionary.

IGNORAMUS. I'm quite certain that his father wouldn't let him write a dictionary. Why, the library at Bynton hasn't been opened for years.

If, after five minutes of that, Ignoramus cannot get Sapiens floundering about in a world he knows nothing of, it is his own fault.

But if Sapiens is over-tenacious there is a final method which may not be the most perfect, but which I have often tried myself, and usually with very considerable success:

SAPIENS. Nonsense, man. The Dictionary. The *Greek* dictionary.

IGNORAMUS. What has *Ananti* to do with Greek?

SAPIENS. I said [Greek: *Anankae*].

IGNORAMUS. Oh! h---h! you said [Greek: *anankae*], did you? I thought you said *Ananti*. Of course, Scott didn't call the play *Ananti*, but *Ananti* was the principal character, and one always calls it that in the family. It is very well written. If he hadn't that shyness about publishing ... and so forth.

Lastly, or rather Penultimately, there is the method of upsetting the plates and dishes, breaking your chair, setting fire to the house, shooting yourself, or otherwise swallowing all the memory of your shame in a great catastrophe.

ON IGNORANCE cont.

But that is a method for cowards; the brave man goes out into the hall, comes back with a stick, and says firmly, "You have just deliberately and cruelly exposed my ignorance before this company; I shall, therefore, beat you soundly with this stick in the presence of them all."

This you then do to him or he to you, *mutatis mutandis, ceteris paribus*; and that is all I have to say on Ignorance.

KICK IRRATIONAL

Brian Lord is a cartoonist and member of Middle Tennessee Mensa (Nashville area). His cartoon Kick Irrational is read weekly by people in 192 cities, 46 states and 9 countries via the Internet. You can see the Kick Irrational comics page at www.kickirrational.com

KICK IRRATIONAL by Brian Lord

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GOOD WINE CHEAP (and good food to go with it)

By John Grover

This column is for the reader who has just gotten home from working all day and then has to face preparing dinner for a room full of unappreciative twits (or appreciative ones if you are lucky). The Boss absolutely swears by "Twenty Minute Chicken Dishes" by Karen A. Levin (published by Contemporary Books). Every dish in it, including the one below, starts with boneless chicken breast and then takes that simple ingredient into many very tasty directions.

The wine this month is a white from the Venetian Region of Northeast Italy, a 2003 Pinot Grigio produced by Casa Geretto. I usually do not care for low priced Pinot Grigio's. They can be weak and watery or overly acidic. But this pale crisp wine has a very pleasant distinctive citrus taste with a hint of peach and melon. It's a good match for the recipe below, and goes for about \$8 a bottle.



Tarragon Chicken with Gorgonzola Sauce

Ingredients:

2 whole chicken breasts, split, boned and skinned

1/2 tsp of salt

1/4 tsp of ground white pepper

2 tbsp butter or margarine

1/3 cup of crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

1/4 cup of chicken broth

1/4 cup heavy cream

1 tbsp minced fresh tarragon or

1 tsp dried tarragon.

(You can also substitute black pepper for the white pepper and 1/4 cup of blue cheese for the 1/3 cup Gorgonzola because of the sharper taste.)

Pound chicken to 1/2 inch thickness. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook chicken in butter until cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Remove chicken from skillet and reduce heat to medium. Add remaining ingredients to skillet and whisk until thickened and well blended. Return chicken to skillet. Spoon sauce over chicken and heat through. Serve with pasta or rice. Makes 4 servings.

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

.I hope that you will contact me with your comments and favorite wines at jgrover@berk.com. I will be happy to share them with the broader Mensa group.

THE JANUARY DINNER

THE GUNS THAT WON THE WEST

At January's Southern CT Mensa dinner, we heard from Ken McConvey about the history of guns in the 19th century American West. Sharing stories, his knowledge of firearms, and some speculations, Ken gave us an idea of how soldiers, rangers, Indians, manufacturers, and robbers saw the new weapons used on the American frontier.

As Ken told us, there really was no one gun that won the West, but if one had to pick one it would be the buffalo gun. Settlers used this to kill buffaloes, removing the Indians larder. But there were many inventors and manufacturers who revolutionized the firearms industry in the 19th century, perhaps none more so than Samuel Colt, inventor of the first gun that could be fired without reloading. Colt produced the first commercial revolver, the Paterson, a five-shooter that was adopted by the Texas Rangers. Prior to Colt's invention, rangers often carried more than one pistol in their belt because they only had single shot guns. Up until that point, Indians could match the rangers in battle because they could often fire and reload their bows with arrows faster than the rangers could their pistols. But when Samuel Walker ordered Colts for the Rangers, it changed the face of war. In the battle of Walker's Creek, fifteen rangers using the Colt revolvers defeated about eighty Comanches. Similarly elsewhere on the frontier, Indians usually could not withstand the new rapid firepower of settlers, and fell victim to it.

In 1846, Walker, as a captain of the Texas Rangers, traveled East to recruit. While there, he visited Sam Colt, and suggested trigger and guard improvements for Colt's revolver. Colt developed a new, powerful six-shooter which he dubbed the Walker Colt. The Walker won orders from the Army and revived Colt's business. Colt's revolvers became the leading weapon in the U.S. and many other countries in the second half of the 19th century.

Rangers weren't the only ones who put revolvers to use. It also became the favored weapon of Pony Express riders. These mail carriers formerly carried pistols with a spare cylinder, but Colt's

six-shooters gave them a big advantage over robbers, ensuring that the mail could be safely delivered.

Ken also talked about some of the innovations in rifles that changed warfare. In 1847, Winchester produced the first smokeless powder weapon. Before that, soldiers who were fired upon would always know where the enemy was from the smoke emanating from their rifles. All the Civil War battlefields were smoky scenes of hell. But after Winchester's invention, the attacker was more difficult to trace.

One person asked about Connecticut's role in producing the guns of that era, and Ken told how Winchester, Whitney, and Colt set up firearms factories in Connecticut. Colt had started out in Paterson, New Jersey but failed in business there. He came to Hartford, Connecticut seeking what many other manufacturers would find - skilled and reliable workers who could mass produce the quality weapons he became famous for.

Ken was glad to answer many other questions about legendary guns, and recount the folklore surrounding famous and infamous figures such as Sam Bowie and the James brothers. A Mensan since 1972, Ken is sure to turn up at more Mensa events in the future, where you can exchange information and opinions with him.



MIND AND MONEY

THE ENDOWMENT EFFECT

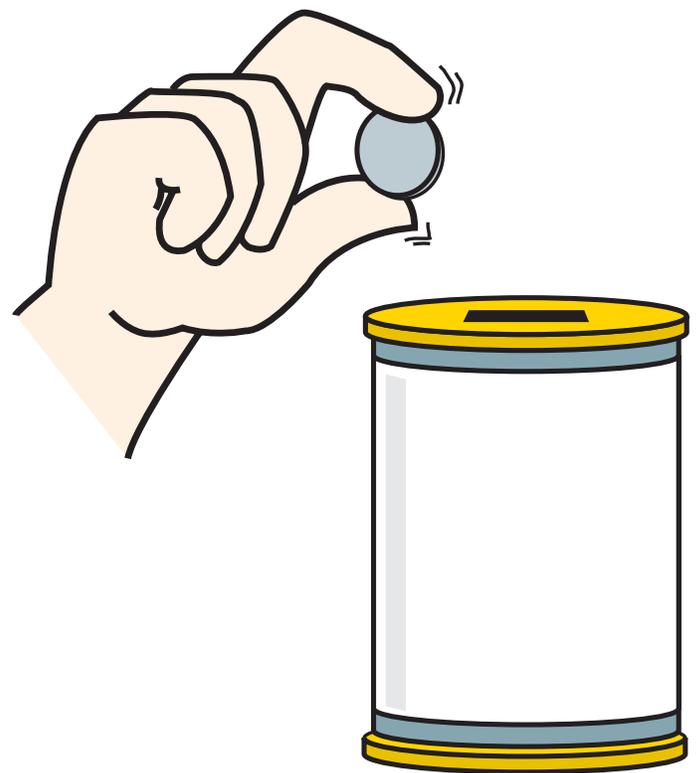
You may know of people who won't throw out useless or worthless things they own. Even if they would never purchase the item again, they are strangely unwilling to part with it. Economists have a name for this type of behavior - the endowment effect. It is simply people's tendency to place special value on what they already possess. They will demand a higher price to sell something than they would be willing to pay for it. Experiments by behavioral economists show that the difference can be striking.

One experiment at Cornell University demonstrated how big the endowment effect can be. Researchers asked a group of students which they preferred, a coffee mug or a chocolate bar with the same price. Opinion was split almost evenly. Then they gave out the two gifts randomly and told the students they could trade them. Economists would assume that half of the students would trade because half of them had the item they valued less. But only 10% of the subjects traded. Even though they had only had their "endowment" for a very short while, students were reluctant to sell it for something they had preferred a few minutes before. Just possessing the good seemed to make it more valuable to people.

Another experiment produced even stranger results. Subjects were given a chance to buy a card that had an expected payout of \$1.92 in a drawing. Then they were asked how much they would sell their chance for. Participants, on average, said that they would sell it for \$1.86. Afterward, they played another round of the same game except that they were allowed to pick the card out of the deck themselves. This time, despite the fact that they faced the same odds, the participants wanted \$6 for "their" card. The mere fact that they had touched the card made it worth more to them. Researchers tried the same experiment at MBA schools. The result? The students sold the cards for over \$9! The "personal touch" made the subjects value the cards as if they owned them, and they demanded more for their endowment.

The endowment effect can help us understand the stock market and real estate markets a little better. It seems to explain why after a stock market plunge, people who bought when the market was higher consider the stocks they bought too valuable to part with but too expensive to buy more of. If they won't sell a stock for \$20, they must consider it undervalued. But if it's undervalued, why shouldn't they buy more of it? The same tendency seems to widen the spread between what homeowner's ask for their house and what buyers are willing to pay. If people value highly what they have had for mere minutes, then imagine how much they value what they have lived in for years.

People appear to become attached to the things they own, sometimes even when they haven't owned them that long. They value what the personal more than the useful, and ask for much more than they are willing to pay. This is the psychology of the endowment effect.



POETRY CORNER

February

Helen Hunt Jackson (1830 -1885)

STILL lie the sheltering snows, undimmed and white;
 And reigns the winter's pregnant silence still;
 No sign of spring, save that the catkins fill,
 And willow stems grow daily red and bright.
 These are days when ancients held a rite
 Of expiation for the old year's ill,
 And prayer to purify the new year's will:
 Fit days, ere yet the spring rains blur the sight,
 Ere yet the bounding blood grows hot with haste,
 And dreaming thoughts grow heavy with a greed
 The ardent summer's joy to have and taste;
 Fit days, to give to last year's losses heed,
 To recon clear the new life's sterner need;
 Fit days, for Feast of Expiation placed!

An Arctic Quest

Helen Hunt Jackson (1830 -1885)

O PROUDLY name their names who bravely sail
 To seek brave lost in Arctic snows and seas!
 Bring money and bring ships, and on strong knees
 Pray prayers so strong that not one word can fail
 To pierce God's listening heart!

Rigid and pale,
 The lost men's bodies, waiting, drift and freeze;
 Yet shall their solemn dead lips tell to these
 Who find them secrets mighty to prevail
 On farther, darker, icier seas.

I go
 Alone, unhelped, unprayed-for. Perishing
 For years in realms of more than Arctic snow,
 My heart has lingered.
 Will the poor dead thing
 Be sign to guide past bitter flood and floe,
 To open sea, some strong heart triumphing?
 How? How?

Boyish Sleep

Hamlin Garland, (1860 - 1940)

AND all night long we lie in sleep,
 Too sweet to sigh in, or to dream,
 Unnoting how the wild winds sweep,
 Or snow clouds through the darkness stream
 Above the trees that moan and sign
 And clutch with naked hands the sky.
 Beneath the checkered counterpane
 We rest the soundlier for the storm;
 Its wrath is only lullaby,
 A far off, vast and dim refrain.

Travel

Edna St. Vincent Millay, (1892 - 1950)

THE railroad track is miles away,
 And the day is loud with voices speaking,
 Yet there isn't a train goes by all day
 But I hear its whistle shrieking.

All night there isn't a train goes by,
 Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming,
 But I see its cinders red on the sky,
 And hear its engine steaming.

My heart is warm with friends I make,
 And better friends I not be knowing;
 Yet there isn't a train I'd rather take,
 No matter where it's going.



MENTAL MATTERS

TYPES OF MEMORY

Memory can be divided into three main types: episodic memory, semantic or factual memory, and procedural memory. The first two are classified as declarative memories because people can consciously recall them and describe them. In contrast, people usually don't have to consciously recall procedures they have learned, they merely perform them.

Episodic memory is the memory of events or 'episodes'. These are usually the most vivid memories but sometimes they are distorted by a lack of focus. We often cannot control or repeat events; they just happen to us. Hence, we don't have time to zero in on details. So episodic memory can be a collage of sights, sounds, and smells, colored by subsequent information.

Semantic memory is the memory of facts and specifics. These memories are usually the most easily forgotten, especially when they are isolated facts; that is, not connected to other facts or experiences. Someone can understand and remember new facts more easily if they can associate them with things that they already know. Indeed, this is much of what learning is.

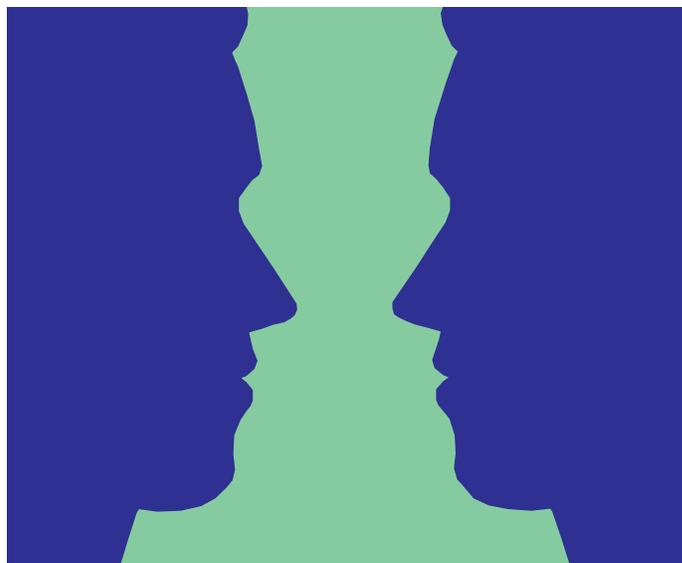
Procedural memory is the memory of skills such as walking, tying shoelaces, picking things up, printing letters, bicycling, driving, or working a machine. These skills are almost always learned through direct practice or demonstration, not through verbal or written instructions. Indeed, they can become so ingrained that people can't explain them to others. To develop the memory for some complicated motor skills may require lengthy practice, but people can keep improving at these tasks and do not lose them easily. They may slow slightly in these skills as they age, they don't forget how to do them unless they suffer serious brain damage.

The different memories may differ not just conceptually but neurologically. Patients who have suffered brain damage sometimes have trouble remembering recent events in their life but still remember detailed facts and knowledge. So episodic and semantic memory may be independent.

Even if the different types of memory are independent in the brain, they are not always clearly separated in daily life. Some activities, such as meetings at work, may blend all three. People may have to know statistics or schedules to answer questions; they have to exercise judgment based on facts and experience to set priorities; and they may have to remember procedures for running equipment used at the meeting. But even activities considered purely mental like reading require some procedural memory, such as moving one's eyes across lines and down the page. So the three categories of memory often work in tandem.

What we call knowledge is usually a synthesis of the three memory types. Knowledge is certainly more than just facts. It is the memory of many related facts, experiences, and skills in ways that help us understand a whole topic or give us insight and judgment. Knowledge is harder to come by than mere facts, but we usually remember knowledge better than facts because it represents a network of associated facts, remembrances of people, places, and situations, and know-how. Because they are all related, they reinforce each other, making them harder to slip from memory.

The three memory types describe the contents of our memory, that huge complicated collection of our brain's thinking that we retain. Each helps us understand the past and anticipate the future.



BOOK REVIEW

By Rick D'Amico

Buck Up, Suck Up . . . and Come Back When You Foul Up: 12 Winning Secrets from the War RoomBy James Carville and Paul Begala
Simon and Schuster, 2001, 224 pp.

Like them or loathe them, James Carville and Paul Begala have acquired a wealth of political knowledge from their many campaigns, some victorious and some not so successful. In this book, they share some of the wisdom that they picked up along the way. While it's written from a political perspective, the strategies and tactics described also apply to corporate and everyday life.

In the introduction, Carville and Begala state, "We aren't attempting to rewrite Machiavelli or Sun-tzu..." Somehow, I think just the opposite is true, and this statement was an attempt to use the power of suggestion. Pragmatism is the guiding light throughout the book, as exemplified by some of the rules they give: Kick A**, Kiss A**, and Frame the Debate, to name three of them. They admit that there's a time to be gracious and a time to engage in smash-mouth politics.

The book is filled with examples of successful and unsuccessful strategies from both the political right and left. For example, they praise President George W. Bush for the disciplined way he stuck to basic issues and Hillary Clinton for her work ethic, and show how these traits led them to victory. After all, the authors claim that this book is about strategy, not ideology.

The rule that I found most interesting was "Turn Weaknesses into Strength." An example was how Abraham Lincoln used his physical unattractiveness to create an image of decency and integrity. By the same token, they point out it is important not to let one's strengths turn into weaknesses. They reluctantly gave the example of Bill Clinton's glibness making him think that he could talk his way out of an embarrassing situation when he couldn't.

Every now and then, they show us their human

side with an anecdote or example from their personal lives. For example, after a story about the work ethic of Cal Ripken, Jr. (who broke Lou Gehrig's record for most consecutive Major League Baseball games), we learn that the Begala boys wear his number on their jerseys as a tribute. In giving an example of taking risks, James recounts a story from his undergrad days at LSU. He had a crush on a girl but was afraid to ask her out. Years later, he met the woman's daughter, who told him that back then, her mom had a crush on him, and was disappointed that he never asked her out. For diversions, the book contains several recipes for Carville and Begala family favorites such as French toast.

I suspect that anyone who knows me at least causally is probably surprised that I actually went out and read this book, as the authors' political philosophies differ tremendously from mine. I'll admit that when I first bought the book, it was in the spirit of the saying, "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer." However, after reading the book, I came away with a better understanding of the art of getting elected, as well as some of the politics of day-to-day life. Also, it also gave me a newfound respect for the authors, although I remain unconverted. It was an enjoyable and enlightening read, and I recommend it highly.



CHAPTER NOTES

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