

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA CHRONICLE

If you or someone you know would like to be a speaker at our monthly dinner, please contact Jim Mizera at 203-522-1959 or Jmizera@hotmail.com. 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 receive a renewal notice in the mail in January. You can return that form or visit www.us.mensa.org to renew.

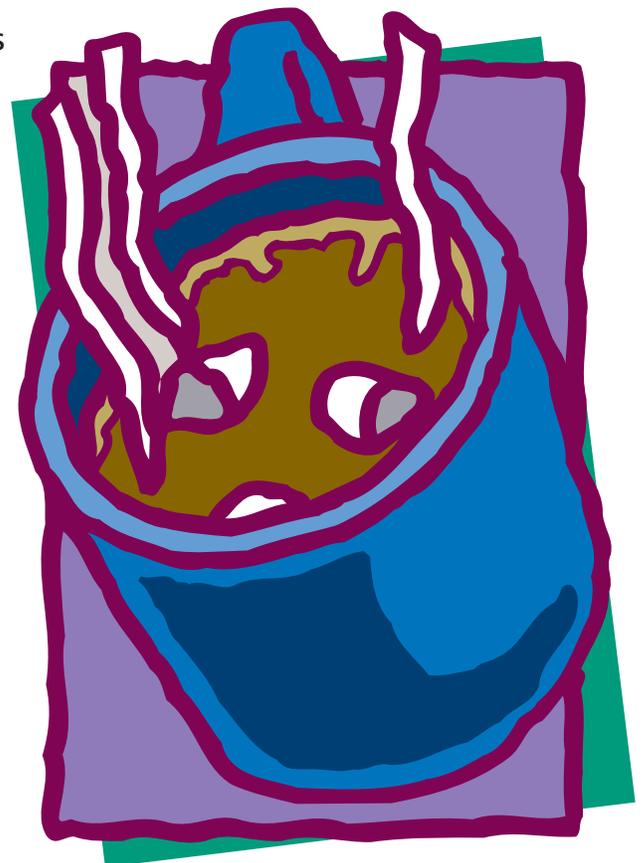
ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE CHRONICLE



going back to 2000 are available on the Internet at <http://www.doctechanical.com/scm>. 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.

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Southern CT Mensa is looking for an Activities Coordinator. If you would like to fill this position, please contact President Rick D'Amico at usamarbiol@aol.com

SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Friday, January 13, 7:00.

Southern CT and Western MA 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, January 21, 7:00.

Monthly Dinner - New Members Dinner

All Mensans are invited to "INNOVATION FOR FUN AND PROFIT." Put on your thinking cap! At this month's dinner, chapter member David Wittenberg, director of the innovation workgroup at Optimus Solutions, will discuss how smart organizations are applying leading-edge innovation techniques to improve results for their customers and employees. The evening will include guided activities where can develop your own innovations.

New members are encouraged to attend to meet with Mensans new and old. Before the presentation, we will 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). You can bring a donation of money or food to benefit the Connecticut Food Bank. Dress is casual. Contact Jim Mizera, jmizera@hotmail.com, 203-522-1959, for information and reservations. Please try to MAKE RESERVATIONS by FRIDAY, January 20 so we can assure that the restaurant can provide seating in the main area for everyone. Guests are welcome. 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.

Admitted in CT, NY & OR

Sharon Oberst DeFala, Esq.
GENERAL PRACTICE OF LAW

<p>Law Offices Gary Oberst A Professional Corporation 111 East Avenue Norwalk, CT 06851</p>	<p>Office (203) 866-4646 Home (203) 852-9571 Fax (203) 852-1574 sharon@oberstlaw.com</p>
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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

Friday, February 10, 7:00.

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner

See above listing for details.

Saturday, February 18, 7:00.

Monthly Dinner

See above listing for details.

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.

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.

For event listings in the Media, leave a message for me by the 10th of the previous month at

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.

(860) 872-3106 or email Lilith@snet.net Subject: Calendar There's also the [CWM-Announce] upcoming events reminder email list, which I send out *approximately* weekly. Subscribe and unsubscribe options are located at <http://lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/cwm-announce> for your convenience. And any Mensan who wants to notify their fellow Ms about any late-breaking event s/he wants to share with our delightful chapter, please email me ASAP with the details and I'll get it out to the list. You may also check the website www.cwm.us.mensa.org for our calendar updates.

JANUARY

5, 12, 19, 26 Thursdays 7:00 pm
Scrabble (WE) at Emmanuel Synagogue, 160 Moehegan Drive, West Hartford. Ellen Leonard, (860) 667-1966 (Please call first to make sure this is happening today).

6 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 upstairs at George's II Restaurant, 950 Yale Avenue, Wallingford, CT 06492 Phone: 203-269-1059. Directions: Exit 66 off Wilbur Cross Parkway. Turn left (south) onto Rte 5. Take first left that's not a highway entrance onto Yale Avenue. George's II is in the Yale Plaza on the right.

13 Friday 6:30 pm
Trivial Pursuit Night
 Henry Greene would like to host another pot luck dinner and Trivial Pursuit night at his home in Windsor, CT. Yay Henry! All are welcome, rsvp by Jan. 11, call 860-298-0323 or hgreene@ixguys.com for directions and food coordination.

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15 Sunday 2:00 pm
Book Discussion: *Stranger in a Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein will be discussed in Vernon. Contact LocSec Bob Smith BoboRobDOS@snet.net or 860-872-3106. Amazon.com sez: *Stranger in a Strange Land*, winner of the 1962 Hugo Award, is the story of Valentine Michael Smith, born during, and the only survivor of, the first manned mission to Mars. Michael is raised by Martians, and he arrives on Earth as a true innocent: he has never seen a woman and has no knowledge of Earth's cultures or religions. But he brings turmoil with him, as he is the legal heir to an enormous financial empire, not to mention de facto owner of the planet Mars. With the irascible popular author Jubal Harshaw to protect him, Michael explores human morality and the meanings of love. He founds his own church, preaching free love and disseminating the psychic talents taught him by the Martians. Ultimately, he confronts the fate reserved for all messiahs.

The impact of *Stranger in a Strange Land* was considerable, leading many children of the 60's to set up households based on Michael's water-brother nests. Heinlein loved to pontificate through the mouths of his characters, so modern readers must be willing to overlook the occasional sour note ("Nine times out of ten, if a girl gets raped, it's partly her fault."). That aside, *Stranger in a Strange Land* is one of the master's best entertainments, provocative as he always loved to be. Can you grok it? --Brooks Peck

20 Friday 6:00-8:00 pm 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

25 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.

27 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.

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

Granite Gathering 2006: Return to Middle Earth (FEBRUARY 17-19, 2006)

NEW HAMPSHIRE MENSA, S 16TH ANNUAL REGIONAL GATHERING!

Stellar hospitality, ample food and libations, scintillating speakers, music, games, contests, book sale, silent auction, and more! Medieval or Tolkiensian garb encouraged; rentals benefiting our scholarship fund will be available.

Location: Crowne Plaza Nashua, 2 Somerset Parkway, Nashua, NH 03063. Room rate of \$94 (exclusive of 8% NH Rooms Tax) per night guaranteed until 1/18/06. Call 603-886-1200 and ask for the Mensa rate.

Complimentary indoor parking garage and full-service health club. Complimentary shuttle to and from Manchester Airport when prearranged. Rates: \$65 until 1/15/06; \$75 thereafter or at the door. Children 8-17 are \$15 less than regular rate; children under 8 are free. Saturday rate is \$10 less than regular rate in effect at time of registration. Saturday evening buffet is \$28. (All registrants who buy their Saturday evening buffet tickets before 1/15/06 will be entered into a drawing for fabulous prizes, including free registration for the 2007 Granite Gathering!)

To Register: Make checks payable to "New Hampshire Mensa" and mail with name(s), full address, email address, and telephone number to Registrar Deb Stone, 24312 Spartan Street, Mission Viejo, CA 92691-3921. (email: debstone@cox.net) (You may also charge to MasterCard or Visa; send Deb your card number, expiration

date, and name on card.) Do not mail registration after 2/1/06; please register at the door instead. Questions, concerns, criticisms, compliments? Contact Claire Natola at rgchair@nh.us.mensa.org or 603-279-9986. For latest details, see www.nh.us.mensa.org/rgnews.shtm. See you in February



COLLOQUIUM 2006 - "Revolution in Cosmology", OCT. 6 - 8, 2006

ALBANY, NY. Presented by Mensa and the Mensa Education and Research Foundation. Hosted by Mensa of NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK.

Einstein unified space, time and matter 100 years ago; recent events have revealed the existence of a mysterious new kind of matter and energy. This existence was unforeseen by even Einstein, and it demands a new vision of unification. This new matter/energy has now been confirmed by many of the world's top scientists in astronomy, astrophysics and cosmology. It encompasses 96 percent of the known universe. It is quite likely that the resolution of this conundrum will impact the world as we know it forever.

We are inviting speakers from an elite group of world renowned scientists. These guests are not simply familiar with the current state of knowledge; they created it! Topics will include: Dark matter, Dark energy, String theory, Quantum loop gravity, The accelerated expansion of the universe, and more....

REGISTRATION:

Register online at www.colloquium.us.mensa.org. Space is limited!

"Revolution in Cosmology" will take place at the Albany Marriott in Albany, N.Y. To make your reservations, call 800/443-8952 and mention Mensa to get our group rate of \$109 per person for single or double rooms. If making reservations online, enter the code "amsamsa" to get the group rate.

The hotel provides free transportation to and from Albany International Airport; for pick up, use the courtesy phone kiosk in the luggage claim area. Hotel parking is free.

Albany Marriott
189 Wolf Road
Albany, N.Y. 12205
Phone: 518/458-8444
Fax: 518/458-7365
<http://marriott.com/property/property/page/ALBNY>

Adult member registration rates:

\$170 until April 30, 2006

\$220 until Aug. 31, 2006

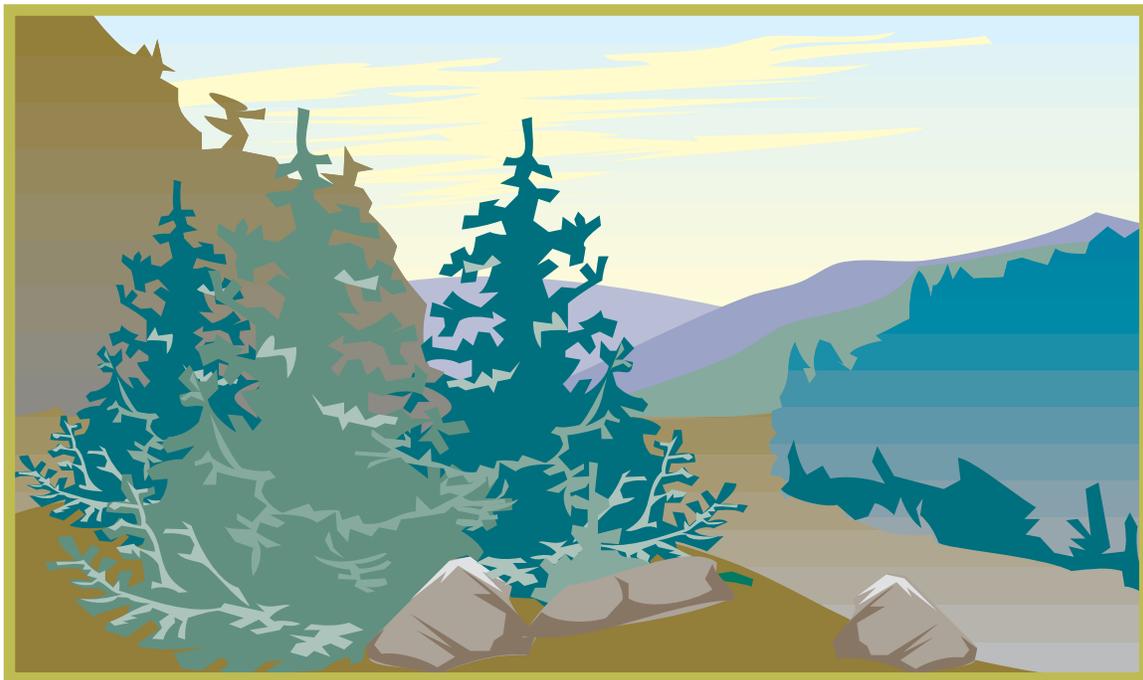
\$270 after Sept. 1, 2006

Non-Mensa registration rates: add \$50

Student registration rate: \$220

Your registration includes lunch on Saturday and dinner on Friday and Saturday.

All Colloquium 2006 reservations must be made by the cut-off date of Sept. 15, 2006. Reservation requests received after this cut-off date will be subject to availability and rate review. All reservations must be accompanied by a first night's room deposit or guaranteed by a major credit card.



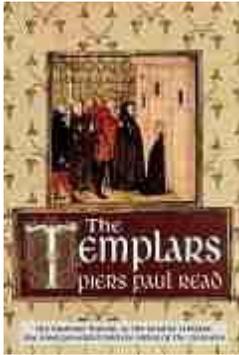
If you wish to comment on articles or submit material, please write or e-mail Jim Mizera at PMB #181, 7365 Main St., Stratford, CT. 06614-1300, Jmizera@hotmail.com. E-mail submissions are preferred. Please include your name, address, and e-mail address or telephone number. Anonymous material will be 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.

BOOK REVIEW

by Rick D'Amico

The Templars: The Dramatic History of the Knights Templar, the Most Powerful Military Order of the Crusades

by Piers Paul Read



Piers Paul Read is best known for his book, *Alive*, an account of plane crash survivors in the Andes. Besides numerous books, he has written a number of television plays, and several of his novels have been filmed for cinema and television.

Few medieval organizations have stirred up such an enduring interest as have the Knights Templar. They were the first uniformed standing army known to the Western world. They are also given credit for being the world's first bankers.

The first portion of the book discusses the history of the Temple of Solomon, from Roman times to the Moslem conquest of the Holy Land. The high water mark for Islam ran through most of the Iberian Peninsula, parts of France, Italy, Austria, and much of Asia Minor.

Most of the book deals with the Crusades, looking at both sides, successes and failures. It discusses the First Crusade and the formation of Outremer, lands taken back from Islam.

Perhaps the principal part of this description involves the Third Crusade, and the conflict between Richard the Lionheart and Saladin. Read gave a detailed description of the Battle of Acre, one of, if not the bloodiest battle of the Third Crusade.

The book chronicles how the Knights Templar met their demise on October 13, 1307 (a Friday, which probably gave rise to the superstition that Friday the 13th is unlucky). Pope Clement V and King Philip IV of France (known as "Philip the Fair," not for his style of governing, but for his light skin and hair) arrested virtually all of the Knights Templar in France, charging them with heresy and other crimes, including perversion and homosexuality.

The question of whether or not the Knights Templar were in fact guilty of heresy and other misconduct as charged is even today a subject of conjecture. Read does an excellent job of examining both sides of the argument. Although some Knights succumbed to the tortures administered under Philip IV and made confessions, many did not. Were the Templars uneducated fanatics or enlightened knights? The reader is left to reach his/her own conclusion.

I found the book interesting and full of information. As I stated earlier, the author gives both sides of historical opinion on the Knights. The book gives such a comprehensive look at them and the Crusades that it can be a little difficult to follow without taking notes.

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FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Marghretta McBean

It's still officially autumn yet every state in our region has had at least one snowfall. Of course snow is relative: here in New York City, three inches means traffic snarl ups; up in Syracuse, in Central New York Mensaland, that does not qualify for shoveling. Paul Baxter, the President of that group, told me that last week's twenty-four (24!!!) inches of snow did merit snowplows.

I just got back from the American Mensa Committee meeting in Phoenix, which went smoothly, thanks in large part to Chairman Russ Bakke's insistence on civility. He has worked hard to create a collegial atmosphere where differences of opinion do not lead to verbal warfare. While it may be difficult at times to remember common courtesy in the heat of an argument, it is a lesson that is sorely needed and well learned.

I was pleased to sponsor a motion that will call for a special referendum to amend our bylaws to allow alternative forms of voting (e.g. online). In the last election, there were numerous requests for this and if the referendum passes, the 2007 elections would be the first to offer this.

Dr. John Sheehan (New Hampshire/Maine Mensa) was named the new head of Name & Logo and Bylaws Committees. He replaces Regional Vice Chair Mike Siegler who had to resign due to work commitments. Dr. Sheehan continues his excellent work as the national Development Committee Chair.

Michael Beetham addressed the AMC about the latest Project Inkslinger® developments. This committee works with local groups who are interested in supplying books and other printed material to needy recipients. Hurricane Katrina highlighted the plight of the loss of libraries, schoolbooks, etc. If there are any groups who are interested in participating, contact him at <inkslinger@us.mensa.org>

Our treasurer, Charlie Bruce, had some not too good news: overall budgeted income is down because of decreased testing and evaluation. With two national hearings adding to the expense column, it looks like we may be out about

\$45K by fiscal year's end 31 March. A small positive note: overall expenses are also down.

A motion to establish an "Angel Fund" to help financially strapped members was defeated. While I think the idea is a good one, the degrees of bureaucracy included in the motion were onerous and off-putting to me. Many groups quietly help out members they know have fallen on hard times by simply paying their dues, no questions asked. I also know that individuals have done so, often without the recipient knowing who did the kind deed. That to me is true charity.

After a lot of soul searching and a secret ballot, the motion to fund AMC members for up to five nights for World Gathering meeting attendance was passed. Many seemed to feel their Mensan political lives would end if they publicly accepted the funding, hence the request for anonymous voting. Acceptance of the monies is voluntary as is attendance at the International Board of Directors' meetings. It will be a unique opportunity to meet the heads of international Mensa groups, and as the host country, AMC members were strongly urged to take advantage of this event.

In the "I'm proud to be a member of Greater New York Mensa" department, our group won the "chocolate contest" Category I division for National Testing Day by testing 56 people between October 8th and November 5th 2005. While getting test takers to actually show up is beyond any proctor's power, the fact that so many did is a credit to the hard work of the GNYM proctor cadre.

There is good news from the Green Mountain state. After a long leadership hiatus, two Vermont Mensans have volunteered to help get the group up and running. I have appointed James Matthew as treasurer and Katja Swift as president/loc sec. As a brand-new GenX-aged member, Katja will bring energy and a fresh outlook to the group.

continued on next page

As the days get shorter and the temperatures drop, hot drinks are a welcome delight. Bishop is a delicious addition to any winter table:

BISHOP

- 1 large navel orange
- 12 cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon each: mace, ground ginger; cinnamon, allspice, ground cloves
- 1 lemon: rind thinly peeled; juice strained
- 8 oz. water
- 4 oz. (1/2 cup) sugar
- 1 bottle (32 oz.) port

Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2006!

1. Stick cloves into orange, put into fireproof / ovenproof bowl, cover closely and roast until a rich brown colour. Cut up into 8 pieces; remove seeds.
2. Put spices, lemon peel and water into enamel saucepan and bring to boil. Simmer gently 30 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice and sugar.
3. Add roasted orange and port, heat up again but be careful not to let it boil - you will ruin the port.
4. Strain off liquid through fine sieve if desired and serve hot.

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

www.KickComics.com



PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. What is the difference between "sanguine" and "sanguinary"?
2. True or False: Demography is destiny.
3. What was the first country to use paper money?
4. What is the most common conceit?
5. How many countries are there in Europe?
6. What projects did you most underestimate and which did you most overestimate last year?
7. What are the most popular college majors? What are the most popular majors at Yale?
8. What are the major explanations offered for the decline of the Roman Empire?
9. What are the five pillars of Islam?
10. What is wrong with the adage, "Take one day at a time"?
11. On the game show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, how often is the person called on the lifeline correct and how often is the audience correct?
12. What shortcuts did you devise in the past year?
13. How many varieties of goldfish are there?

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

1. What percentage of known species are insects?

A: An estimated 72% of species are insect species.

4. What percentage of American adults own their own business?

A: Somewhere between 9 - 12% according to different surveys such as the Current Population Survey (CPS) and census tabulations.

6. What is the difference between a mountain and a hill?
What is the smallest mountain?

A: The difference between a mountain and a hill depends on local usage. Mountains are higher and steeper, but there is no universally accepted height requirement for a mountain. Some encyclopedias say a mountain must be at least 2,000 feet high. The smallest standard used is about 1,000 feet.

About 24% of the earth is mountainous, and about 10% of the world's population lives in these areas.

8. How many cowboys are there in the United States?

A: The number of cowboys is unknown, but there are about 10,000 people who work in animal livestock jobs like farm hand, and within this category, there are over 3,000 workers who handle livestock in rodeos and circuses.



NOTED AND QUOTED

My health is good; it's my age that's bad.

- Roy Acuff, (1903 - 1992), country singer

All human activity is prompted by desire.

- Bertrand Russell, (1872 - 1970)

It is certainly desirable to be well descended, but the glory belongs to our ancestors.

- Plutarch, (46 - 120), "Morals", 100 A.D.

As an artist, all I need is my paints and brushes - and someone to drag me away when the canvas is done.

- Pablo Picasso, (1881 - 1973)

The world is funnier than you think. And the more you think about it, the funnier it gets.

- Bill Bonner, financial columnist and author

The trouble with most of us is that we would rather be ruined by praise than saved by criticism.

- Norman Vincent Peale, (1898 - 1993)

When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary.

- Thomas Paine, (1737 - 1809)

Toe: A part of the foot used to find furniture in the dark.

- Anonymous

The Devil's boots don't creak.

- Scottish Proverb

Act only on that maxim which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

- Immanuel Kant, (1724 - 1804)

The absent are never without fault. Nor the present without excuse.

- Benjamin Franklin, (1706 - 1790)

Life is generally something that happens elsewhere.

- Alan Bennett, (1934 -), English dramatist

The joy of the young is to disobey - but the trouble is, there are no longer any orders.

- Jean Cocteau, (1889 - 1963), French dramatist, director.

Life's a tough proposition, and the first hundred years are the hardest.

- Wilson Mizner, (1876 - 1933), American humorist

No artist tolerates reality.

- Friedrich Nietzsche, (1844 - 1900)

Cat: a pygmy lion who loves mice, hates dogs, and patronizes human beings.

- Oliver Herford, (1863 - 1935), English author and illustrator

Art teaches nothing, except the significance of life.

- Henry Miller, (1891 - 1980), U.S. novelist.

I'm not being rude. You're just insignificant.

- Anonymous

All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately unrehearsed.

- Sean O'Casey, (1880 - 1964), Irish playwright

We have only one person to blame, and that's each other.

- Barry Beck, (1957 -), NHL hockey player, on who started a fight during a game

Some people think it's holding on that makes one strong; sometimes it's letting go.

- Sylvia Robinson

Life is an eternal now shrouded in dreams of tomorrow and memories of yesterday.

- Rein Nomm, professor, economic analyst, photographer, and aphorist

There is only one large circle that we march in, around and around, each of us with our own little picture - in front of us - our own little mirage that we think is the future.

- Lorraine Hansberry, (1930 - 1965), "A Raisin in the Sun," 1959

One reason writers write is out of revenge. Life hurts; certain ideas and experiences hurt; one wants to clarify, to set out illuminations, to replay the old bad scenes and get the words one didn't have the strength or ripeness to say when those words were necessary for one's dignity or survival.

- Cynthia Ozick, (1928 -), Jewish-American novelist, *Writers at Work*



RUMINATIONS

THE BET, (1904)

by Anton Chekhov, (1860 - 1904)

I

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was pacing from corner to corner of his study, recalling to his mind the party he gave in the autumn fifteen years before. There were many clever people at the party and much interesting conversation. They talked among other things of capital punishment. The guests, among them not a few scholars and journalists, for the most part disapproved of capital punishment. They found it obsolete as a means of punishment, unfitted to a Christian State and immoral. Some of them thought that capital punishment should be replaced universally by life-imprisonment.

"I don't agree with you," said the host. "I myself have experienced neither capital punishment nor life-imprisonment, but if one may judge a priori, then in my opinion capital punishment is more moral and more humane than imprisonment. Execution kills instantly, life-imprisonment kills by degrees. Who is the more humane executioner, one who kills you in a few seconds or one who draws the life out of you incessantly, for years?"

"They're both equally immoral," remarked one of the guests, "because their purpose is the same, to take away life. The State is not God. It has no right to take away that which it cannot give back, if it should so desire."

Among the company was a lawyer, a young man of about twenty-five. On being asked his opinion, he said:

"Capital punishment and life-imprisonment are equally immoral; but if I were offered the choice between them, I would certainly choose the second. It's better to live somehow than not to live at all."

There ensued a lively discussion. The banker who was then younger and more nervous suddenly lost his temper, banged his fist on the table, and turning to the young lawyer, cried out:

"It's a lie. I bet you two millions you wouldn't

stick in a cell even for five years."

"If you mean it seriously," replied the lawyer, "then I bet I'll stay not five but fifteen."

"Fifteen! Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions."

"Agreed. You stake two millions, I my freedom," said the lawyer.

So this wild, ridiculous bet came to pass. The banker, who at that time had too many millions to count, spoiled and capricious, was beside himself with rapture. During supper he said to the lawyer jokingly:

"Come to your senses, young roan, before it's too late. Two millions are nothing to me, but you stand to lose three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you'll never stick it out any longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary is much heavier than enforced imprisonment. The idea that you have the right to free yourself at any moment will poison the whole of your life in the cell. I pity you."

And now the banker, pacing from corner to corner, recalled all this and asked himself:

"Why did I make this bet? What's the good? The lawyer loses fifteen years of his life and I throw away two millions. Will it convince people that capital punishment is worse or better than imprisonment for life? No, no! all stuff and rubbish. On my part, it was the caprice of a well-fed man; on the lawyer's pure greed of gold."

He recollected further what happened after the evening party. It was decided that the lawyer must undergo his imprisonment under the strictest observation, in a garden wing of the banker's house. It was agreed that during the period he would be deprived of the right to cross the threshold, to see living people, to hear human voices, and to receive letters and newspapers. He was permitted to have a musical instrument, to read books, to write letters, to drink wine and smoke tobacco. By the agreement he could communicate, but only in silence, with the outside world through a little window specially constructed for this purpose. Everything neces-

sary, books, music, wine, he could receive in any quantity by sending a note through the window. The agreement provided for all the minutest details, which made the confinement strictly solitary, and it obliged the lawyer to remain exactly fifteen years from twelve o'clock of November 14th, 1870, to twelve o'clock of November 14th, 1885. The least attempt on his part to violate the conditions, to escape if only for two minutes before the time freed the banker from the obligation to pay him the two millions.

During the first year of imprisonment, the lawyer, as far as it was possible to judge from his short notes, suffered terribly from loneliness and boredom. From his wing day and night came the sound of the piano. He rejected wine and tobacco. "Wine," he wrote, "excites desires, and desires are the chief foes of a prisoner; besides, nothing is more boring than to drink good wine alone," and tobacco spoils the air in his room. During the first year the lawyer was sent books of a light character; novels with a complicated love interest, stories of crime and fantasy, comedies, and so on.

In the second year the piano was heard no longer and the lawyer asked only for classics. In the fifth year, music was heard again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him said that during the whole of that year he was only eating, drinking, and lying on his bed. He yawned often and talked angrily to himself. Books he did not read. Sometimes at nights he would sit down to write. He would write for a long time and tear it all up in the morning. More than once he was heard to weep.

In the second half of the sixth year, the prisoner began zealously to study languages, philosophy,

and history. He fell on these subjects so hungrily that the banker hardly had time to get books enough for him. In the space of four years about six hundred volumes were bought at his request. It was while that passion lasted that the banker received the following letter from the prisoner: "My dear gaoler, I am writing these lines in six languages. Show them to experts. Let them read them. If they do not find one single mistake, I beg you to give orders to have a gun fired off in the garden. By the noise I shall know that my efforts have not been in vain. The geniuses of all ages and countries speak in different languages; but in them all burns the same flame. Oh, if you knew my heavenly happiness now that I can understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. Two shots were fired in the garden by the banker's order.

Later on, after the tenth year, the lawyer sat immovable before his table and read only the New Testament. The banker found it strange that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred erudite volumes, should have spent nearly a year in reading one book, easy to understand and by no means thick. The New Testament was then replaced by the history of religions and theology.

During the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an extraordinary amount, quite haphazard. Now he would apply himself to the natural sciences, then he would read Byron or Shakespeare. Notes used to come from him in which he asked to be sent at the same time a book on chemistry, a text-book of medicine, a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. He read as though he were swimming in the sea among broken pieces of wreckage, and in his desire to save his life was eagerly grasping one piece after another.

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

II

The banker recalled all this, and thought:

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock he receives his freedom. Under the agreement, I shall have to pay him two millions. If I pay, it's all over with me. I am ruined for ever ..."

Fifteen years before he had too many millions to count, but now he was afraid to ask himself which he had more of, money or debts. Gambling on the Stock-Exchange, risky speculation, and the recklessness of which he could not rid himself even in old age, had gradually brought his business to decay; and the fearless, self-confident, proud man of business had become an ordinary banker, trembling at every rise and fall in the market.

"That cursed bet," murmured the old man clutching his head in despair... "Why didn't the man die? He's only forty years old. He will take away my last farthing, marry, enjoy life, gamble on the Exchange, and I will look on like an envious beggar and hear the same words from him every day: 'I'm obliged to you for the happiness of my life. Let me help you.' No, it's too much! The only escape from bankruptcy and disgrace - is that the man should die."

The clock had just struck three. The banker was listening. In the house every one was asleep, and one could hear only the frozen trees whining outside the windows. Trying to make no sound, he took out of his safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house. The garden was dark and cold. It was raining. A damp, penetrating wind howled in the garden and gave the trees no rest. Though he strained his eyes, the banker could see neither the ground, nor the white statues, nor the garden wing, nor the trees. Approaching the garden wing, he called the watchman twice. There was no answer. Evidently the watchman had taken shelter from the bad weather and was now asleep somewhere in the kitchen or the greenhouse.

"If I have the courage to fulfill my intention," thought the old man, "the suspicion will fall on the watchman first of all."

In the darkness he groped for the steps and the door and entered the hall of the garden-wing, then poked his way into a narrow passage and struck a match. Not a soul was there. Some one's bed, with no bedclothes on it, stood there, and an iron stove loomed dark in the corner. The seals on the door that led into the prisoner's room were unbroken.

When the match went out, the old man, trembling from agitation, peeped into the little window.

In the prisoner's room a candle was burning dimly. The prisoner himself sat by the table. Only his back, the hair on his head and his hands were visible. Open books were strewn about on the table, the two chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner never once stirred. Fifteen years' confinement had taught him to sit motionless. The banker tapped on the window with his finger, but the prisoner made no movement in reply. Then the banker cautiously tore the seals from the door and put the key into the lock. The rusty lock gave a hoarse groan and the door creaked. The banker expected instantly to hear a cry of surprise and the sound of steps. Three minutes passed and it was as quiet inside as it had been before. He made up his mind to enter.

Before the table sat a man, unlike an ordinary human being. It was a skeleton, with tight-drawn skin, with long curly hair like a woman's, and a shaggy beard. The colour of his face was yellow, of an earthy shade; the cheeks were sunken, the back long and narrow, and the hand upon which he leaned his hairy head was so lean and skinny that it was painful to look upon. His hair was already silvering with grey, and no one who glanced at the senile emaciation of the face would have believed that he was only forty years old. On the table, before his bended head, lay a sheet of paper on which something was written in a tiny hand.

"Poor devil," thought the banker, "he's asleep and probably seeing millions in his dreams. I have only to take and throw this half-dead thing on the bed, smother him a moment with the pil-

low, and the most careful examination will find no trace of unnatural death. But, first, let us read what he has written here."

The banker took the sheet from the table and read:

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock midnight, I shall obtain my freedom and the right to mix with people. But before I leave this room and see the sun I think it necessary to say a few words to you. On my own clear conscience and before God who sees me I declare to you that I despise freedom, life, health, and all that your books call the blessings of the world.

"For fifteen years I have diligently studied earthly life. True, I saw neither the earth nor the people, but in your books I drank fragrant wine, sang songs, hunted deer and wild boar in the forests, loved women... And beautiful women, like clouds ethereal, created by the magic of your poets' genius, visited me by night and whispered to me wonderful tales, which made my head drunken. In your books I climbed the summits of Elbruz and Mont Blanc and saw from there how the sun rose in the morning, and in the evening suffused the sky, the ocean and lie mountain ridges with a purple gold. I saw from there how above me lightnings glimmered cleaving the clouds; I saw green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, cities; I heard syrens singing, and the playing of the pipes of Pan; I touched the wings of beautiful devils who came flying to me to speak of God... In your books I cast myself into bottomless abysses, worked miracles, burned cities to the ground, preached new religions, conquered whole countries...

"Your books gave me wisdom. All that unwearying human thought created in the centuries is compressed to a little lump in my skull. I know that I am cleverer than you all.

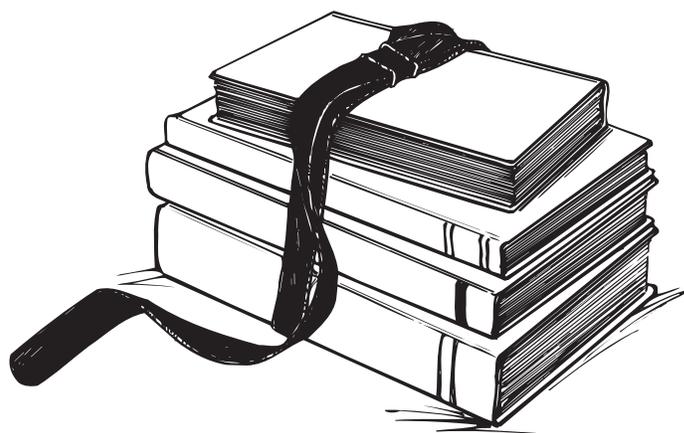
"And I despise your books, despise all worldly blessings and wisdom. Everything is void, frail, visionary and delusive as a mirage. Though you be proud and wise and beautiful, yet will death wipe you from the face of the earth like the mice underground; and your posterity, your history, and the immortality of your men of genius will be as frozen slag, burnt down together with the terrestrial globe.

"You are mad, and gone the wrong way. You take falsehood for truth and ugliness for beauty. You would marvel if suddenly apple and orange trees should bear frogs and lizards instead of fruit, and if roses should begin to breathe the odour of a sweating horse. So do I marvel at you, who have bartered heaven for earth. I do not want to understand you.

"That I may show you in deed my contempt for that by which you live, I waive the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise, and which I now despise. That I may deprive myself of my right to them, I shall come out from here five minutes before the stipulated term, and thus shall violate the agreement."

When he had read, the banker put the sheet on the table, kissed the head of the strange man, and began to weep. He went out of the wing. Never at any other time, not even after his terrible losses on the Exchange, had he felt such contempt for himself as now. Coming home, he lay down on his bed, but agitation and tears kept him a long time from sleeping...

The next morning the poor watchman came running to him and told him that they had seen the man who lived in the wing climb through the window into the garden. He had gone to the gate and disappeared. The banker instantly went with his servants to the wing and established the escape of his prisoner. To avoid unnecessary rumours he took the paper with the renunciation from the table and, on his return, locked it in his safe.



POETRY CORNER

A Daughter of Eve

Christina Georgina Rossetti, (1830 - 1894)

A FOOL I was to sleep at noon,
 And wake when night is chilly
 Beneath the comfortless cold moon;
 A fool to pluck my rose too soon,
 A fool to snap my lily.

My garden-plot I have not kept;
 Faded and all-forsaken,
 I weep as I have never wept:
 Oh it was summer when I slept,
 It's winter now I waken.

Talk what you please of future spring
 And sun-warm'd sweet to-morrow:~
 Stripp'd bare of hope and everything,
 No more to laugh, no more to sing,
 I sit alone with sorrow.

Excerpt from Tain Bo Cualgne

(from 12th Cent. Ireland)

MY tidings for you: the stag bells,
 Winter snows, summer is gone.

Wind high and cold, low the sun,
 Short his course, sea running high.

Deep-red the bracken, its shape soon gone,
 The wild goose has raised its wonted cry.

Cold has caught the wings of birds,
 Season of ice~these are my tidings.

**An Eternity**

Archibald MacLeish, (1892 - 1982)

THERE is no dusk to be,
 There is no dawn that was,
 Only there's now, and now,
 And the wind in the grass.

Days I remember of
 Now in my heart, are now;
 Days that I dream will bloom
 White the peach bough.

Dying shall never be
 Now in the windy grass;
 Now under shaken leaves
 Death never was.

Something Left Undone

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, (1807 - 1882)

LABOR with what zeal we will,
 Something still remains undone,
 Something uncompleted still
 Waits the rising of the sun.

By the bedside, on the stair,
 At the threshold, near the gates,
 With its menace or its prayer,
 Like a medicant it waits;

Waits, and will not go away;
 Waits, and will not be gainsaid;
 By the cares of yesterday
 Each to-day is heavier made;

Till at length the burden seems
 Greater than our strength can bear,
 Heavy as the weight of dreams
 Pressing on us everywhere.

And we stand from day to day,
 Like the dwarfs of times gone by,
 Who, as Northern legends say,
 On their shoulders held the sky.

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

By John Grover

This month we go to the Rioja region of Spain. Rioja is probably the best-known Spanish wine region in this country. It is noted for its robust red wine, but we will be matching an affordable and outstanding Rioja white wine with what is perhaps my favorite Mediterranean-style seafood dish.

The wine is the 2003 Rioja Blanco from Marqués de Cacerés. This dry white wine is made from the Viura grape and it's a nice alternative to Chardonnay. It has a pleasant citrus and floral nose and a crisp acidity that matches well with the classic ingredients of olive oil, lemon and garlic in this month's recipe (See below). Blanco usually sells for \$7 to \$8 a bottle.



Scallop Gratin with Garlic-Lemon Butter

(adapted from Epicurious.com)

Ingredients:

- 5 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 tbsp chopped shallot
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 tsp grated lemon peel
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups fresh bread crumbs made from French bread
- 1 1/2 pounds sea scallops side muscles trimmed (these are the large scallops; don't even consider those wimpy little bay scallops.)

Mix 4 tablespoons chopped parsley, butter, chopped shallot, minced garlic, and grated lemon peel in medium bowl to blend. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (Seasoned butter can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before using.)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add breadcrumbs; sauté until crisp and golden, about 6 minutes. Transfer to plate.

Rub some of seasoned butter on bottom and sides of four 1 1/4-cup ramekins, custard cups or individual casserole dishes. Divide scallops among prepared dishes. Spread 1 teaspoon remaining seasoned butter on top scallops in each dish. Top with breadcrumbs, dividing equally. Dot bread crumbs with remaining seasoned butter.

Place dishes on large baking sheet. Bake in oven until scallops are cooked through, about 25 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley and serve. Makes four servings.

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.

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

CHAPTER NOTES

Southern CT Mensa is looking for an Activities Coordinator. If you would like to fill this position, please contact President Rick D’Amico at usamarbiol@aol.com

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 Please allow four weeks for the change in MENSA 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 MENSA Bulletin.)

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