

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 have received a renewal notice in the mail in January. You can return that form or visit www.us.mensa.org to renew.

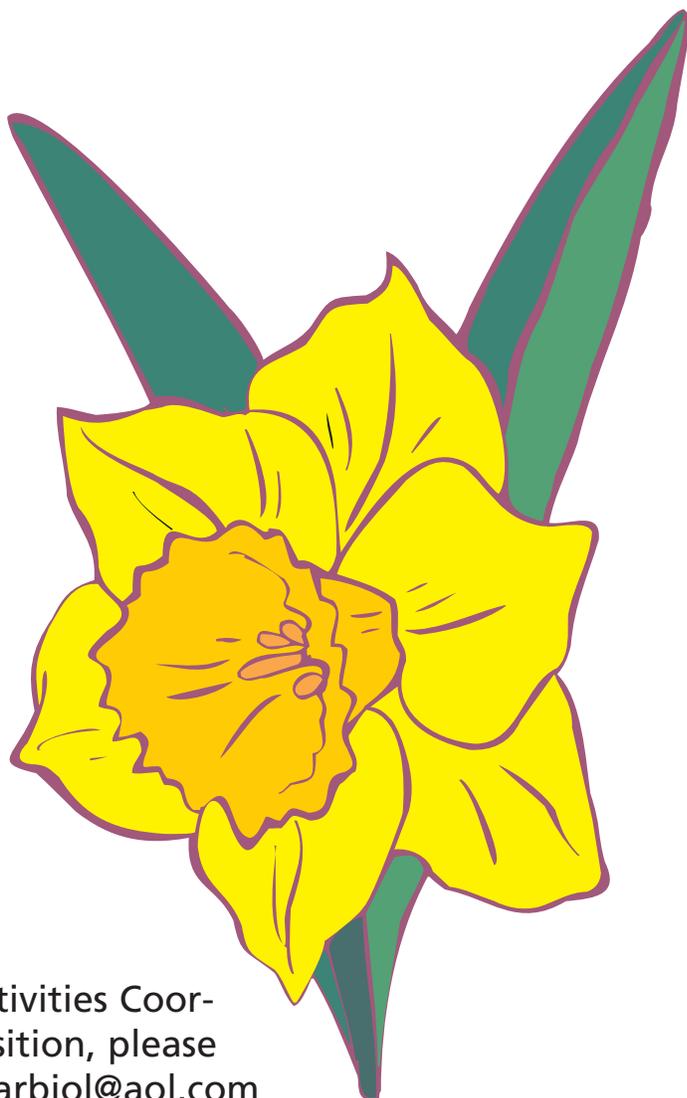
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going back to 2000 are available on the Internet at <http://www.doctechical.com/scm>. You can download the latest e-mail version of the Chronicle there, as well as previous issues. All issues are in read-only Adobe Acrobat format so there is no chance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

Friday, March 10, 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, March 18, 6:30.
Monthly Dinner

Carolyn Finch, M.S., Speech/Language Pathologist and Applied Kinesiologist, will give a talk on "Body Language and the Brain-Body Connection." Carolyn has over twenty-five years of training and development in speech, business and education for corporations, health care associations, and educational facilities, and practices in the Danbury area. We look forward to an intriguing presentation, so make your reservations early. 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 preservations. Please try to MAKE RESERVATIONS by FRIDAY, March 17 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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Saturday, March 25, 8:00

Theater Event

"Room Service" performed by the Darien Players at the Weatherstone Studio Theater, Darien Town Hall, 2 Renshaw Rd., Darien, CT. A screwball homage to theater made famously funny by the Marx Brothers. A nimble-witted producer, living on credit with several actors in a Broadway hotel, is desperately in need of a good script. He finds one, and by great good luck, he also finds an angel with \$15,000. During a few hectic days, the producer tries to outwit his creditors while staging his play at the same time. Tickets are \$20. Contact Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959, jmizera@hotmail.com, for info or reservations.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR APRIL

Friday, April 7, 7:00.

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner

See above listing for details.

Friday, April 15, 6:30.

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.

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.

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

MARCH

3 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.

17 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

17 Friday 7:30 pm

Trivial Pursuit Night

at Henry Greene's home in Windsor (very close to I-91 exit 38) Please call by March 10 (860-298-0323) to make your reservations and get directions.

18 Saturday 2:00-6:00 pm

St. Patrick's Potluck

Moodus Lake Come to the frozen shores of Moodus Lake and share your best Irish story while you engage in our favorite activity - eating, potluck style. Arrive by 2:00 p.m. for a 4:00 p.m. feast (depending on who brings what.) We all turn into pumpkins by 6:00 p.m.. Limited to 12, so e-mail or call in your reservation early. doc@auxjohn.com, or John @ 873-1794 or Ginger @ 886-0585. Snow date the next day. We will coordinate contributions with you. John will demonstrate his newly acquired culinary skills by preparing a main meat dish, with brown rice. Please remember this is an alcohol and smoke free zone. A prize for the person who is "most presidential!" (Hillary Clinton look-alikes will not be admitted.) for directions <http://www.auxjohn.com/pages/221674/index.htm>

24 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.

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29 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.

31 Friday 5:30 pm

5th Friday Happy Hour

Let's get together EAST of the Connecticut River at George's Restaurant at the Quality Inn at 51 Hartford Turnpike (Rte. 83) in Vernon, CT (near exit 64 on Rt. 84 and the golf course). Come join us. There are some great munchies provided by George's, or a real meal if you like. We're looking forward to seeing you! Remember, look for the yellow balloon. Contact is our LocSec Bob Smith at 860-872-3106 or BoboRobDOS@snet.net

LOOKING AHEAD

April 23 Sunday

Into long-range planning? Put a New Britain Rock Cats baseball game on your calendar for Sunday afternoon, April 23.

May 7 Sunday 2:00 pm

Book Discussion: Island & Brave New World

by Aldous Huxley. Two short books on the themes of eutopian/dystopian social engineering. <http://www.huxley.net/hotlinks.htm>

Want to host this event at your house? Let Gisela know Lilith@snet.net or 860-872-3106.

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

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/ALBANY>

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.

FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Marghretta McBean

The unseasonably warm mid-January weather accompanied me on my eight-hour train ride up for a weekend in Randolph, Vermont. There I was pleased to be the guest of Vermont Mensa's new president, Katja Swift. She, her husband and lively almost 3-year old daughter hosted a warm and wonderful "post-holiday" party. Some of the Vermont attendees had never been to a Mensa event, but nonetheless traveled over two hours to enjoy great food, sparkling conversation (natch!), a wealth of board games, and strategizing for Vermont Mensa's future. Other visitors included a mini-contingent from New Hampshire: Claire Natola, the editor of the award-winning Momentum; John Bauman, New Hampshire and Maine Mensa's president; and Dr. John Sheehan, American Mensa's Director of Development. All were eager to share their insights about group dynamics, from volunteer recruitment to event planning. Four prospective members also joined the festivities and seem likely to join after meeting such "normal" [their word] people.

Upon returning to the Big Apple, I found that Mensa politics had not been idle. Alan Baltis, the Vice Chair of Region 3 (our northwestern neighbour) resigned from the American Mensa Committee, Mensa's board of directors. A search is currently underway for his replacement, who must be approved by a vote of the AMC.

March is membership renewal month, but it is also a good time to consider the wonderful proctors who are responsible for so many of us joining Mensa. The first Mensan many of us (including me) formally met was the person who administered the qualifying test. Arthur Pogran, 93 years young and still an active member of Greater New York Mensa, tested me thirty years ago - I was just a mere tot ;-). If you have a college degree, like meeting people, can give & follow instructions and have a few hours to spare a month, please consider becoming a proctor. Ask your local group's Proctor Coordinator for more info.

"Carnevale" means "farewell to meat;" in many cultures not only meat, but dairy items are avoided during Lent, the forty days of fasting before Easter. The days leading up to Ash Wednesday (March 1 this year), the beginning of Lent, are full of festivities and luscious foods in Brazil, home of my maternal grandfather. This rich Carnevale cake uses copious quantities of the rich ingredients which have to be used up before Lent begins.

**BÔLO DE CASTANHA DO PARA
(BRASIL NUT CAKE)**

- 1 cup butter
 - 4 cups sugar
 - 12 egg yolks, beaten
 - 4 cups sifted flour
 - 3 tsp. baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp. salt
 - 2 tsp. cocoa
 - 1 tsp. cinnamon
 - 2 cups milk
 - 1/2 cup port
 - 2 cups finely chopped Brasil nuts
 - 6 egg whites, beaten until soft peaks form
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
 2. Cream butter and sugar together until lemon coloured and creamy.
 3. Add egg yolks and beat well.
 4. Sift dry ingredients together. Add to first mixture alternating with the milk and wine. The first and last additions should be dry.
 5. Stir in the nuts.
 6. Fold in the egg whites.
 7. Bake in a parchment paper lined (or greased and floured) 10 inch (diameter) x 4 inch (deep) tube pan for 1 hour or until tests done.

Note: Egg whites freeze perfectly for up to one year. Use ice cube trays: 2 tablespoons equal one egg white.

To see this and past articles visit
<http://region1.us.mensa.org/cooking.shtml>

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. What do you consider luxuries and what do you consider necessities?
2. What is the difference between undertones and overtones?
3. Argue for and against the claim that history repeats itself.
4. What is the size of the labor force in Fairfield County? In New Haven County?
5. What is the difference between eccentricity and flakiness?
6. Who are the United States' largest trading partners?
7. What is an antique?
8. What is the median retirement age in the US?
9. How many different types of humor are there?
10. What is the only U.S. state with no straight lines in its border?
11. What popular or fad diets are the most restrictive?
12. Who is the world's best selling author?
13. What do you think is the average ratio of friends to enemies?
14. Name the world's largest landlocked country.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

2. What is a transitive verb and what is an intransitive verb?
- A: A transitive verb is a verb whose action is exerted on a person or thing. In the active voice, the action is exerted on the object of the verb: "I hammered the nail." In the passive voice, the action is exerted on the subject: "The cart was pulled by Herb." An intransitive verb is not exerted on anything: "She wept."
4. What language does "kumbaya" come from?
- A: "Kumbaya" comes from the Gullah language, a mixture of English and languages of West Africa originating with enslaved Africans living on the Sea Islands, near the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. "Kumbaya" means "come by here." The song "Kumbaya" began as a Gullah spiritual in the 19th century, and was first recorded in the 1920s and published in the 1930s. It may have been brought to Angola by missionaries and then brought back to the States in the 1950s.
 6. How much did Americans give to charities to

help 9/11 victims? To help the tsunami victims? To help Hurricane Katrina victims?

- A: According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, as of February, Americans have given about \$3.2 billion to aid Hurricane Katrina victims, \$2.2 billion to support the 9/11 relief efforts, and \$1.3 billion to help those suffering from the 2004 tsunami disaster.

After nine days of each disaster, the Red Cross had received these donations: Hurricane Katrina, \$439.5 million; 9/11, \$141.4 million; and tsunami relief, \$97.3 million.

The top five collectors of Katrina charity have been: the American Red Cross, \$2.12-billion; Salvation Army, \$325-million; Catholic Charities USA, \$154.46-million; Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund, \$110-million; and Habitat for Humanity, more than \$95-million.

8. What is the average cost of a U.S. wedding?
- A: According to Fairchild Bridal Group (www.theknot.com), \$26,300.

continued on next page

10. What percentage of babies born in the US have birth defects? What percentage are born underweight?

A: According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), in 2002, 1.11% of babies born in the U.S. had very low birth weight, 6.12% had moderately low birth weight, and 10.4% were born prematurely.

12. What percentage of the landmass of Europe consists of islands and peninsulas?

A: One-third of the landmass of Europe consists of islands and peninsulas. By contrast, only 1% of South America's landmass consists of islands and peninsulas.

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



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.

NOTED AND QUOTED

Sanity is a cozy lie. - *Susan Sontag, (1933 -), U.S. critic, novelist, and screenwriter*

It is the passions that do and undo everything. - *Bernard de Fontenelle, (1657 -1757), French philosophic and scientific writer*

Time moves slowly, but passes quickly. - *Alice Walker, (1944 -)*

Chaos Theory is a new theory invented by scientists panicked by the thought that the public was beginning to understand the old ones. - *Mike Barfield*

My theory has always been, that if we are to dream, the flatteries of hope are as cheap, and pleasanter, than the gloom of despair. - *Thomas Jefferson, (1743 - 1826)*

The house of delusions is cheap to build but drafty to live in. - *Alfred Edward (A.E.) Housman, (1859-1936), English scholar and poet*

I don't use drugs, my dreams are frightening enough. - *M.C. Escher, (1898 - 1972), Dutch artist*

You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today. - *Abraham Lincoln, (1809 - 1865)*

The second half of a man's life is made up of nothing but habits he has acquired during the first half. - *Fyodor Dostoyevsky, (1821 - 1881)*

The best way to become acquainted with a subject is to write a book about it. - *Benjamin Disraeli, (1804 - 1881)*

Is everything a conspiracy? No. Just the important stuff. - *Jeff Wells, Rigorous Intuition*

History is just new people making old mistakes. - *Sigmund Freud, (1856 - 1939)*

History smiles at all attempts to force its flow into theoretical patterns or logical grooves; it plays havoc with our generalizations, breaks all our rules; history is baroque. - *Will Durant, (1885 - 1981), U.S. historian*

Historians are gossips who tease the dead. - *Voltaire, (1694 - 1778)*

Politeness is the art of choosing among your thoughts. - *Madame de Stael, (1766 - 1817), French-Swiss woman of letters*

Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare. - *Robert Louis Stevenson, (1850 - 1894)*

I do not know what the heart of a rascal may be; I know what is in the heart of an honest man; it is horrible. - *Joseph de Maistre, (1753 - 1821), French writer.*

Poets are born, not paid. - *Wilson Mizner, (1876 - 1933), American humorist*

Writing is a dog's life but the only life worth living. - *Gustave Flaubert, (1821 - 1880), French realist novelist*

My yesterdays walk with me. They keep step, they are gray faces that peer over my shoulder. - *William Golding, (1911 - 1993)*

God writes on both sides of the paper. Do not fail to read both sides simply because one side is more difficult to decipher. - *H. R. Gordon*

Men are all alike in their promises. It is only in their deeds that they differ. - *Moliere, (1622 - 1673)*



THE FEBRUARY DINNER

Ham radio was the topic of conversation at Southern CT Mensa's February dinner. Our speaker was chapter member Bob Bell, who is one of the leaders in local ham radio. Bob gave us a rundown on the history of amateur radio, what its enthusiasts do, and personal insights into the enjoyment he and other have gotten from the hobby.

The majority of the audience had no first-hand experience with ham radio but Bob gave us a basic explanation of how the technology works. Ham, like the cell phone, is a two-way transmitter but it has a wider range - the world. Unlike cell phones or home phones, ham radio requires nothing in the middle, just receiving stations. Operators bounce their signals off the ionosphere to receivers that may be next door or across the globe. They can communicate either by speaking or using Morse Code. Licensing authorities have up to now required operators to prove their proficiency in Morse Code to gain a license, but many are now considering dropping this requisite. Morse Code retains some popularity though for the challenge of learning it and for overcoming international language barriers.

Bob got interested in ham radio when he was 11 years old and read his father's book on the subject. He recalled how fascinated he was by the idea that you could talk to people from all over the world via home equipment that you can fit in a suitcase. He followed up by learning as much as he could about the pastime and got his operator's license when he was 15.

It was during the blackout of 1965 Bob first saw the valuable contribution ham radio could make. In that crisis as in others, ham radio lived up to its motto: 'Ham radio - when all else fails.' Since lights were off and phone lines jammed, ham radio was the most reliable form of communication, the technology of last resort.

About 13 years ago, after being laid off from work, Bob returned to his boyhood hobby and found it every bit as fascinating as it was in his youth. He took responsibility for ham operations in the region covering New Fairfield, Brookfield, Danbury, New Milford, Washington, and Washington Depot. Bob reinvigorated the local CARA

(CT Amateur Radio Association) scene by recruiting 30 new operators, helping boost the total number of amateur radio operators in Connecticut to its current level of approximately 500.

CARA continues a rich history that began in the early 20th century. Ham's origin is tied up with the invention of radio in general. Bob pointed out that there is controversy over who deserves credit, Guglielmo Marconi, Nikola Tesla, or Alexander Popov, but wireless messages were being sent in the first decade of the century. After Marconi sent the first transatlantic transmission in 1902, many people began experimenting with spark gap transmitters that used voltage, coils, capacitors, and an antenna to send messages in Morse Code. These were the first amateur radio operators.

In the following decade, Congress passed the Radio Act due to naval concerns over interference and complaints from Western Union. This legislation limited amateur radio operators to the use of wavelengths below 200 meters (1500 kHz frequency or higher). At the time, these frequencies were considered useless for long-range communication, but this was the part of the spectrum set aside for civilian non-commercial use.

With the new requirements, the number of ham operators plummeted. Shortly thereafter, World War I dealt another blow to the embryonic field when the United States Congress ordered all amateur radio transmitters to cease operating. But after the war, ham radio overcame the legal and technological obstacles. Experimenters came up with better technology that could transmit stable and narrow frequency signals off the ionospheric layers to communicate worldwide and ham radio was reborn.

Ham radio technology has continued to improve over the years. There are now eight or nine ham radio satellites that operators can use, and some hams even bounce signals off the moon. Others have found creative uses such as deploying the radios to control model aircraft. In the last generation, the computer revolution has brought digital communication to the field. This technology, as Bob said, ensures that the hobby will keep changing.

Ham messages provide vital communication in emergencies and Bob has been called out on three such crises. The first was a local ice storm in Torrington that disabled phone service in the area, including calls to the hospital. The other disasters were national: the 9/11 attack in New York, and last fall's Hurricane Katrina. After the 9/11 terrorist strike, New Yorkers en masse tried desperately to use their cell phones to tell each other they were safe. But this overloaded the network and few calls could get through. The Connecticut brigade of ham radio operators was called in on 9/12. Bob served in the Red Cross communications center, making sure that vital messages could be delivered. He performed a similar role in Mississippi in the wake of Katrina. The storm and flood had so crippled the phone system that residents couldn't call across town for weeks. Once again, ham radio was the only way to contact others. Bob was in the last wave of volunteers sent in to man the ham radio transmitters, and he provided a lifeline for both residents and disaster relief personnel.

To prepare for disasters, ham radio operators must take advanced courses. Bob noted that he has taken Emergency Communications 001, 002, the Red Cross Introduction to Disaster Services, and a course FEMA designed. He continues to upgrade his skills to keep up with technology and take new responsibilities.

The value of ham radio during emergencies is legendary, but fortunately Bob and other enthusiasts find pleasure as well as service in their avocation. Bob recounted the many ham conversations he has had with operators from diverse areas of the globe - Belgium, Antarctica, and isolated outposts in Africa. All of these conversations came in as clear as on a phone. He's even

heard space stations overhead talking to other hams, and hopes to get in on one of these chats one day. When radio amateurs talk with someone from a state or country new to them, they exchange what are called QSL cards to confirm their conversation. They enjoy collecting these, and can win awards for hitting certain achievement levels.

Another fun part of ham radio is designing equipment. Amateurs are not required to use specific equipment, as commercial operators are, so they can be creative in building their own stations.

Bob finished his talk with a slide show of photos from Mississippi's Harrison County, taken after Hurricane Katrina. He vividly brought home the devastation but also recalled the warmth and humanity of volunteers who responded calmly to the needs of the victims.

The audience learned much from this introduction to ham radio, and thanked Bob Bell with a rousing round of applause. He gave everyone a glimpse of why hams across the globe have enjoyed this hobby for nearly a century.

Our March speaker will be Carolyn Finch, M.S., Speech/Language Pathologist and Applied Kinesiologist, who will give a talk on "Body Language and the Brain-Body Connection." She is a keynote speaker for many local, state and national business and association conferences, and is a nationally recognized speech coach and author. Make your reservations early so we can book enough seats for this great presentation.



RUMINATIONS

QUALITY

from *The Inn of Tranquillity*, 1912

by John Galsworthy

I KNEW him from the days of my extreme youth, because he made my father's boots; inhabiting with his elder brother two little shops let into one, in a small by-street - now no more, but then most fashionably placed in the West End.

That tenement had a certain quiet distinction; there was no sign upon its face that he made for any of the Royal Family - merely his own German name of Gessler Brothers: and in the window a few pairs of boots. I remember that it always troubled me to account for those unvarying boots in the window, for he made only what was ordered, reaching nothing down, and it seemed so inconceivable that what he made could ever have failed to fit. Had he bought them to put there? That, too, seemed inconceivable. He would never have tolerated in his house leather on which he had not worked himself. Besides, they were too beautiful - the pair of pumps, so inexpressibly slim, the patent leathers with cloth tops, making water come into one's mouth, the tall brown riding boots with marvellous sooty glow, as if, though new, they had been worn a hundred years. Those pairs could only have been made by one who saw before him the Soul of Boot - so truly were they prototypes incarnating the very spirit of all foot-gear. These thoughts, of course, came to me later, though even when I was promoted to him, at the age of perhaps fourteen, some inkling haunted me of the dignity of himself and brother. For to make boots - such boots as he made - seemed to me then, and still seems to me, mysterious and wonderful.

I remember well my shy remark, one day, while stretching out to him my youthful foot: "Isn't it awfully hard to do, Mr. Gessler?"

And his answer, given with a sudden smile from out of the sardonic redness of his beard: "Id is an Ardt!"

Himself, he was a little as if made from leather, with his yellow crinkly face, and crinkly reddish hair and beard, and neat folds slanting down his cheeks to the corners of his mouth, and his gut-

tural and one-toned voice; for leather is a sardonic substance, and stiff and slow of purpose. And that was the character of his face, save that his eyes, which were gray-blue, had in them the simple gravity of one secretly possessed by the Ideal. His elder brother was so very like him - though watery, paler in every way, with a great industry - that sometimes in early days I was not quite sure of him until the interview was over. Then I knew that it was he, if the words, "I will ask my brudder," had not been spoken; and that, if they had, it was his elder brother.

When one grew old and wild and ran up bills, one somehow never ran them up with Gessler Brothers. It would not have seemed becoming to go in there and stretch out one's foot to that blue iron-spectacled glance, owing him for more than - say - two pairs, just the comfortable reassurance that one was still his client.

For it was not possible to go to him very often - his boots lasted terribly, having something beyond the temporary - some, as it were, essence of boot stitched into them.

One went in, not as into most shops, in the mood of: "Please serve me, and let me go!" but restfully, as one enters a church; and, sitting on the single wooden chair, waited - for there was never anybody there. Soon, over the top edge of that sort of well - rather dark, and smelling soothingly of leather - which formed the shop, there would be seen his face, or that of his elder brother, peering down. A guttural sound, and the tip-tap of bast slippers beating the narrow wooden stairs, and he would stand before one without coat, a little bent, in leather apron, with sleeves turned back, blinking - as if awakened from some dream of boots, or like an owl surprised in daylight and annoyed at this interruption.

And I would say: "How do you do, Mr. Gessler? Could you make me a pair of Russia leather boots?"

Without a word he would leave me, retiring whence he came, or into the other portion of the shop, and I would continue to rest in the wooden chair, inhaling the incense of his trade. Soon he would come back, holding in his thin, veined hand a piece of gold-brown leather. With eyes fixed on it, he would remark: "What a beautiful

biece!" When I, too, had admired it, he would speak again. "When do you wand dem?" And I would answer: "Oh! As soon as you conveniently can." And he would say: "To-morrow ford-nighd?" Or if he were his elder brother: "I will ask my brudder!"

Then I would murmur: "Thank you! Good-morning, Mr. Gessler." "Goot-morning!" he would reply, still looking at the leather in his hand. And as I moved to the door, I would hear the tip-tap of his bast slippers restoring him, up the stairs, to his dream of boots. But if it were some new kind of foot-gear that he had not yet made me, then indeed he would observe ceremony - divesting me of my boot and holding it long in his hand, looking at it with eyes at once critical and loving, as if recalling the glow with which he had created it, and rebuking the way in which one had disorganized this masterpiece. Then, placing my foot on a piece of paper, he would two or three times tickle the outer edges with a pencil and pass his nervous fingers over my toes, feeling himself into the heart of my requirements.

I cannot forget that day on which I had occasion to say to him: "Mr. Gessler, that last pair of town walking-boots creaked, you know."

He looked at me for a time without replying, as if expecting me to withdraw or qualify the statement, then said:

"Id shouldn'd 'ave greaked."

"It did, I'm afraid."

"You goddem wed before dey found demselves?"

"I don't think so."

At that he lowered his eyes, as if hunting for memory of those boots, and I felt sorry I had mentioned this grave thing.

"Zend dem back!" he said; "I will look at dem."

A feeling of compassion for my creaking boots surged up in me, so well could I imagine the sorrowful long curiosity of regard which he would bend on them.

"Zome boods," he said slowly, "are bad from birdt. If I can do noding wid dem, I dake dem off your bill."

Once (once only) I went absent-mindedly into his shop in a pair of boots bought in an emergency at some large firm's. He took my order without showing me any leather, and I could feel his eyes penetrating the inferior integument of my foot. At last he said:

"Dose are nod my boods."

The tone was not one of anger, nor of sorrow, not even of contempt, but there was in it something quiet that froze the blood. He put his hand down and pressed a finger on the place where the left boot, endeavoring to be fashionable, was not quite comfortable.

"Id 'urds you dere," he said. "Dose big virms 'ave no self- respect. Drash!" And then, as if something had given way within him, he spoke long and bitterly. It was the only time I ever heard him discuss the conditions and hardships of his trade.

"Dey get id all," he said, "dey get id by adverdisement, nod by work. Dey dake it away from us,

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who love our boots. It comes to this - presently I have no work. Every year it gets less - you will see." And looking at his lined face I saw things I had never noticed before, bitter things and bitter struggle - and what a lot of gray hairs there seemed suddenly in his red beard!

As best I could, I explained the circumstances of the purchase of those ill-omened boots. But his face and voice made so deep impression that during the next few minutes I ordered many pairs. Nemesis fell! They lasted more terribly than ever. And I was not able conscientiously to go to him for nearly two years.

When at last I went I was surprised to find that outside one of the two little windows of his shop another name was painted, also that of a boot-maker - making, of course, for the Royal Family. The old familiar boots, no longer in dignified isolation, were huddled in the single window. Inside, the now contracted well of the one little shop was more scented and darker than ever. And it was longer than usual, too, before a face peered down, and the tip-tap of the bast slippers began. At last he stood before me, and, gazing through those rusty iron spectacles, said:

"Mr. - , isn't it?"

"Ah! Mr. Gessler," I stammered, "but your boots are really TOO good, you know! See, these are quite decent still!" And I stretched out to him my foot. He looked at it.

"Yes," he said, "people do not want good boots, it seems."

To get away from his reproachful eyes and voice I hastily remarked: "What have you done to your shop?"

He answered quietly: "It was too expensive. Do you want some boots?"

I ordered three pairs, though I had only wanted two, and quickly left. I had, I do not know quite what feeling of being part, in his mind, of a conspiracy against him; or not perhaps so much against him as against his idea of boot. One does not, I suppose, care to feel like that; for it was again many months before my next visit to his shop, paid, I remember, with the feeling: "Oh!

well, I can't leave the old boy - so here goes! Perhaps it'll be his elder brother!"

For his elder brother, I knew, had not character enough to reproach me, even dumbly.

And, to my relief, in the shop there did appear to be his elder brother, handling a piece of leather.

"Well, Mr. Gessler," I said, "how are you?"

He came close, and peered at me.

"I am pretty well," he said slowly; "but my elder brother is dead."

And I saw that it was indeed himself - but how aged and wan! And never before had I heard him mention his brother. Much shocked, I murmured: "Oh! I am sorry!"

"Yes," he answered, "he was a good man, he made a good boot; but he is dead." And he touched the top of his head, where the hair had suddenly gone as thin as it had been on that of his poor brother, to indicate, I suppose, the cause of death. "He could not get over losing the old shop. Do you want any boots?" And he held up the leather in his hand: "It's a beautiful piece."

I ordered several pairs. It was very long before they came - but they were better than ever. One simply could not wear them out. And soon after that I went abroad.

It was over a year before I was again in London. And the first shop I went to was my old friend's. I had left a man of sixty, I came back to one of seventy-five, pinched and worn and tremulous, who genuinely, this time, did not at first know me.

"Oh! Mr. Gessler," I said, sick at heart; "how splendid your boots are! See, I've been wearing this pair nearly all the time I've been abroad; and they're not half worn out, are they?"

He looked long at my boots - a pair of Russia leather, and his face seemed to regain steadiness. Putting his hand on my instep, he said:

"Do they find you here? I had trouble with that pair,

I remember."

I assured him that they had fitted beautifully.

"Do you want any boots?" he said. "I can make them quickly; it is a slack dime."

I answered: "Please, please! I want boots all round - every kind!"

"I will make a fresh model. Your foot must be bigger." And with utter slowness, he traced round my foot, and felt my toes, only once looking up to say:

"Did I tell you my brother was dead?"

To watch him was painful, so feeble had he grown; I was glad to get away.

I had given those boots up, when one evening they came. Opening the parcel, I set the four pairs out in a row. Then one by one I tried them on. There was no doubt about it. In shape and fit, in finish and quality of leather, they were the best he had ever made me. And in the mouth of one of the town walking-boots I found his bill. The amount was the same as usual, but it gave me quite a shock. He had never before sent it in till quarter day. I flew downstairs, and wrote a check, and posted it at once with my own hand.

A week later, passing the little street, I thought I would go in and tell him how splendidly the new boots fitted. But when I came to where his shop had been, his name was gone. Still there, in the window, were the slim pumps, the patent leathers with cloth tops, the sooty riding boots.

I went in, very much disturbed. In the two little shops - again made into one - was a young man with an English face.

"Mr. Gessler in?" I said.

He gave me a strange, ingratiating look.

"No, sir," he said, "no. But we can attend to anything with pleasure. We've taken the shop over. You've seen our name, no doubt, next door. We make for some very good people."

"Yes, yes," I said; "but Mr. Gessler?"

"Oh!" he answered; "dead."

"Dead! But I only received these boots from him last Wednesday week."

"Ah!" he said; "a shockin' go. Poor old man starved 'imself."

"Good God!"

"Slow starvation, the doctor called it! You see he went to work in such a way! Would keep the shop on; wouldn't have a soul touch his boots except himself. When he got an order, it took him such a time. People won't wait. He lost everybody. And there he'd sit, goin' on and on - I will say that for him - not a man in London made a better boot! But look at the competition! He never advertised! Would 'ave the best leather, too, and do it all 'imself. Well, there it is. What could you expect with his ideas?"

"But starvation - !"

"That may be a bit flowery, as the sayin' is - but I know myself he was sittin' over his boots day and night, to the very last. You see I used to watch him. Never gave 'imself time to eat; never had a penny in the house. All went in rent and leather. How he lived so long I don't know. He regular let his fire go out. He was a character. But he made good boots."

"Yes," I said, "he made good boots."

And I turned and went out quickly, for I did not want that youth to know that I could hardly see.



POETRY CORNER**THE LO-YU TOMBS**

Li Shang-yin, (813-858)

WITH twilight shadows in my heart
I have driven up among the Lo-yu Tombs
To see the sun, for all his glory,
Buried by the coming night.

A POEM TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Wang Wei, (699-761)

HIDDEN on this mountain, many Buddhist monks
Chant sutras, meditate together;
Men on distant city walls gazing towards the
peaks
See only white, enshrouding clouds.

COMPENSATION

Sara Teasdale, (1884 - 1933)

I should be glad of loneliness
And hours that go on broken wings,
A thirsty body, a tired heart
And the unchanging ache of things,
If I could make a single song
As lovely and as full of light,
As hushed and brief as a falling star
On a winter night.

SEEING A DISTANT VIEW OF CHUNG-NAN MOUNTAIN

Po Chü-i, (772-846)

THE snow has gone from Chung-nan; spring is al-
most come.
Lovely in the distance its blue colors, against the
brown of the streets.
A thousand coaches, ten thousand horsemen
pass down the Nine Roads;
Turns his head and looks at the mountains, -not
one man!

THE HARD ROAD

Li Po (701-762)

PURE wine costs, for the golden cup, ten thousand cop-
pers a flagon,
And a jade plate of dainty food calls for million coins.
I fling aside my food-sticks and cup, I cannot eat nor
drink...
I pull out my dagger, I peer four ways in vain.
I would cross the Yellow River, but ice chokes the ferry;
I would climb the Tai-hang Mountains, but the sky is
blind with snow..
I would sit and poise a fishing-pole, lazy by a brook -
But I suddenly dream of riding a boat, sailing for the
sun...
Journeying is hard,
Journeying is hard.
There are many turnings -
Which am I to follow?...
I will mount a long wind some day and break the heavy
waves
And set my cloudy sail straight and bridge the deep,
deep sea.

EUCLID

Vachel Lindsay, (1879 - 1931)

OLD Euclid drew a circle
On a sand-beach long ago.
He bounded and enclosed it
With angles thus and so.
His set of solemn greybeards
Nodded and argued much
Of arc and circumference,
Diameter and such.
A silent child stood by them
From morning until noon
Because they drew such charming
Round pictures of the moon.

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

By John Grover

This month we take a bit of this past Valentine's Day and encourage you to be romantic on a regular basis throughout the year. The wine we recommend is one of the truly great values out there, and the dessert recipe should raise us all to, dare we say, sensual heights.

The 2004 Riesling from the St. Urbans-Hof winery can only be described in superlatives: lush, rich, complex, etc. This slightly sweet white wine comes from the Mosel Valley of Germany. It has a pronounced melon and pear taste that fills the mouth, and follows with a pucker of crisp acidity. It is wonderful as an aperitif or with the dessert below. This wine should retail for \$11 to \$13 a bottle (or just under \$10 with a decent case discount).

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.

GRAND MARNIER CUSTARD WITH STRAWBERRIES

(adapted from the Bon Appetit Outdoor Entertaining Cookbook)

Ingredients:

1/4 cup whipping cream
3 tbsp sugar
1 large egg
1 large egg yolk
2 tbsp Grand Marnier* or other orange liqueur
2 tbsp orange juice
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp grated orange peel
1 pint basket strawberries hulled and sliced
sprigs of fresh mint for garnish.

Whisk the first 8 ingredients (cream to orange peel) to blend in a heavy medium sauce pan. Whisk over medium heat until mixture thickens and comes to a gentle simmer. Transfer to bowl; cover and chill. (Can be prepared up to two days ahead.)

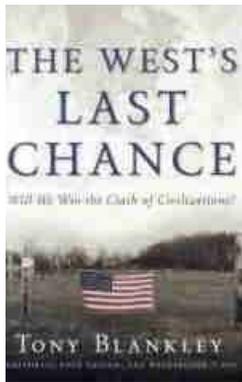
The recipe says to divide the berries between two glass bowls or parfait glasses; BUT, we found there are enough berries and sauce here for four servings. Spoon custard over berries with a sprig of mint in each bowl for garnish (optional - you really don't eat the mint). Although out of season in our area, we found some very nice berries from Mexico in our grocery store. *Also, there are several other orange liqueurs that will serve quite well including: Cointreau, Gran Torres (Spain) and Orange Curacao.

Makes two servings.



BOOK REVIEW

By Rick D'Amico



***The West's Last Chance
Will We Win the Clash of
Civilizations?***
By Tony Blankley

and a nationally syndicated columnist. In *The West's Last Chance*, he argues that Western culture as we know it is in serious jeopardy from militant Islamic forces. While Nazi Germany failed to conquer Europe, Blankley believes Islam just might and it might happen during our lifetimes.

Part of the threat is Europe's below-replacement birthrate and the large immigration rate from Islamic countries. Rotterdam's population is already more than 40% Moslem. If trends continue, Europe would be transformed into what Blankley calls "Eurabia." This would provide militant Islam with a launching pad for global terrorism, and would threaten the West if the radical Islamic segment of Eurabia obtained weapons of mass destruction. [Note: At the time of this book's publication, London had not been attacked by Islamist terrorists and France hadn't experienced the explosion of violence from elements of its Muslim population in its "no-go zone" communities.]

Blankley asserts that the threat from Islam is more than just Osama bin Laden and a few thousand terrorists. The Islamic world, which comprises approximately 20% of the earth's population, is in a state of turmoil the likes of which we haven't seen since 500 years ago when the Ottoman Turks rose to power. A 2004 poll by the *Guardian*, a liberal British newspaper, found that 13% of Muslims admitted to supporting more terrorist attacks on America. This may be the tip of the iceberg; if 13% would admit this in public, how many more actually feel this in private?

The Protestant Reformation was aided by the invention of the printing press. Blankley makes a comparison between the printing press and the Internet, which has helped spread worldwide Islamic unrest. Online terrorist training camps have replaced some of the training grounds of a few years ago.

Despite a grim prognosis, Blankley makes it clear that his book is a warning, not a blueprint for the future. He recommends that we expand the "War on Terror" to a War on Islamist jihadists. He points out that the U.S. took measures during WWII that would be horrific to civil libertarians in today's culture. Blankley quotes Oliver Wendell Holmes' statement that "The Bill of Rights is not a suicide pact." He also cites two hundred years of American law and practice during wartime that permits ethnic profiling for assisting the common defense. During WWII, the National Association of Broadcasters voluntarily agreed not to put out stories that undermined the military effort even before federal regulations required it to.

The author also feels that the West must develop a new patriotism and a capability for moral outrage, and increase its fertility rate above the replacement level. Other measures that Blankley proposes are: a national I.D. card, greater internal surveillance to better control our borders, and more effective tracking of aliens in the U.S.

The West's Last Chance is disturbing - which makes it all that more important for people to read. The danger from militant Islam that Blankley so clearly describes will probably loom very large during the next half century. It is arguably the most important book on political events of 2005.

CHAPTER NOTES

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