

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.

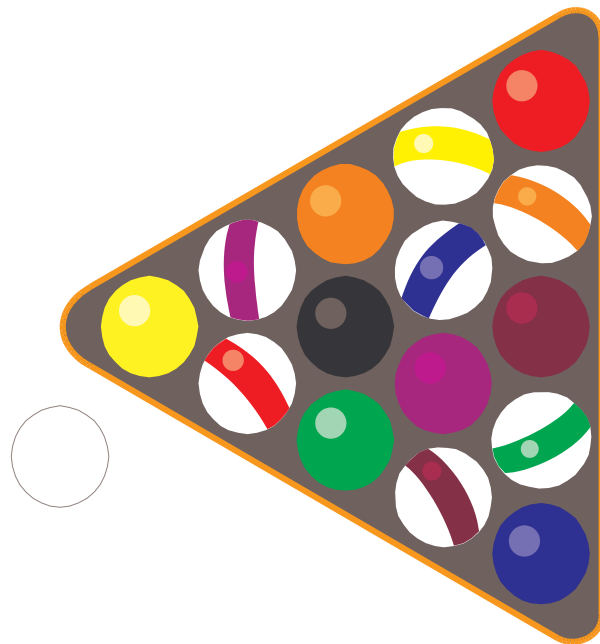


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going back to 2000 are available on the Internet at <http://scm66.org> (Note: this is a new URL). You can download the latest e-mail version of the Chronicle there, as well as previous issues. All issues are in read-only Adobe Acrobat format so there 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 - DECEMBER

Friday, December 14, 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.

BILLIARDS 2008

SCM member and webmaster Tom O'Neill is an avid billiards player. He's been shooting Eight Ball in an APA league for a number of years; in 2004, his team made it to the APA national tournament held annually in Las Vegas (they came in 64th place against over 800 teams). For the new year, Tom is interested in starting a Mensa "Pool Party" event with other SCM members to play billiards on a regular basis (weekly, bi-weekly or monthly). Regardless of your skill level, this is an opportunity to meet with other SCM members, have some fun and work on your pool game. If you are new to the game, Tom will be glad to show you the ropes; if you

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are experienced, bring it on! To get the ball rolling (as it were), contact Tom at doctec2@gmail.com & provide the following information:

1. Your contact information (name, phone, email)
2. Which town is most convenient for you?
 - a) Stamford
 - b) Norwalk
 - c) Monroe
 - d) Danbury
 (These towns have good pool halls and would work best for this event.)
3. What schedule most appeals to you for this event?
 - a) Weekly
 - b) Bi-weekly
 - c) Monthly
4. Which week-night(s) and/or weekend days/evenings are the most convenient for you to participate in this event on a regular basis?



Provided enough participants respond and everyone can agree on a time and schedule, you'll see this event listed in the January Chronicle.

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.

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Friday, January 11, 7:00

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner

See information above

Saturday, January 19, 6:30

Monthly Dinner - New Members Dinner

Members new to Connecticut Mensa are invited to join veteran Mensans for our January dinner at TONELLI'S RESTAURANT, 41 Grassy Plain St., Bethel, CT 06801. Southern CT Mensan Bob Liftig will speak on "The Loyalists of Fairfield County", the area's citizens who remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution. Prof. Liftig started Fairfield U.'s Loyalist Project in the fall of 2006 and has written about the project's research for the Canadian Loyalist Gazette and Westport/ Darien Magazine. Come hear the other side of the story at January's dinner and enjoy the company of fellow Mensans.

Dress is casual. Before the presentation, we will enjoy dinner. Choose what you like from the menu; restaurant adds tip onto the bill. You can bring a donation of money or food to benefit the Connecticut Food Bank. Contact Jim Mizera, jmizera@hotmail.com, 203-522-1959, for information and reservations. Guests are welcome. Restaurant review: <http://acorn-online.net/acornonline/bestbets/bbets05-04-21.htm> You can rate the restaurants we have attended at various web sites such as www.restaurantratingz.com, www.dine.com, www.menuutopia.com,

If you have suggestions for other places we can meet or how we can run our dinners better, please contact chapter President Rick D'Amico at usamarbiol@aol.com.

FROM STAMFORD:

1. Take I-95. Merge onto US-7 Connector NORTH via EXIT 15 toward NORWALK.
2. Take US-7 Connector to MAIN AVE / US-7. Continue to follow US-7 North about 2 miles.
3. Turn LEFT onto US-7 / CT-33 / WESTPORT RD & continue to follow US-7 about 5.5 miles.
4. Turn RIGHT onto SCHOOL ST / CT-107 / CT-57. Follow CT-107 about 1.5 miles.

5. Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto REDDING RD / CT-107. Follow REDDING RD. 5.7 miles. REDDING RD becomes CT-53. Go about 3 miles to the Restaurant, on the left at 41 Grassy Plain St. Bethel, CT 06801-2001

FROM BRIDGEPORT:

1. Take CT-15 SOUTH / MERRITT PKWY Exit 44 toward CT-58 / FAIRFIELD / REDDING.
2. Turn LEFT onto CONGRESS ST.
3. Turn RIGHT onto BLACK ROCK TURNPIKE / CT-58. Follow CT-58 about 15 miles.
4. Turn LEFT onto CT-302 / MILWAUKEE AVE.
5. Turn LEFT onto GREENWOOD AVE / CT-302 and go about 1.5 miles.
6. Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto GRASSY PLAIN ST / CT-53. Go about .1 miles to the Restaurant, at 41 Grassy Plain St.

FROM HARTFORD & I-84:

1. Take I-84 to Exit 5, the Route 53 exit.
2. Take Route 53 south about 3.3 miles.
3. Tonelli's Restaurant is on the right, shortly before the light and intersection.

CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS 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 air-waves 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.

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C&WM Mensan 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.

DECEMBER

6, 13, 20, 27 Thursdays 7:00 pm

Scrabble

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

7 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.

8 Saturday 2:30 pm

Book Discussion: War on the Middle Class

by Lou Dobbs, at Bob & Gisela's house. Contact Gisela Rodriguez at 860-872-3106 or Lilith@snet.net

12 Wednesday 6:00 pm

Happy Hour in Madison

(ME, 2nd Wed) This one is at the Dolly Madison Inn in south-central CT. The Dolly is located just off Route 1 at 73 West Wharf Road, Madison 06443, phone 203-245-7377. We'll meet around 6 PM. There is free lounge food for patrons, and there are burgers and salads to order if you like. Directions: Take I-95 to exit 61 Rt. 79. Go south on Rt. 79 toward Rt. 1 and Madison center for 0.5 mi. Take a right (west) onto Rt. 1 and drive 0.4 mi. to West Wharf Road. Take a left (south) on W. Wharf and drive 0.3 mi. to the Dolly Madison Inn. Parking is available next to the Inn and across the road in the large lot. Questions? Contact Joe Wonowski at 203-785-2998 weekdays, and 203-457-9770 evenings. Hope to see you there!

14 Friday 7:00 pm

C&WM Mensa Holiday Party

(YE) at the Solomon Welles House, 220 Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield (www.wethersfieldct.com/rec/directions.html#swhouse) Come feast and mingle with old and new friends, and maybe give your intellectual 2% at the Chapter Annual Meeting, too. Contact any ExComm member (contact info on the inside back cover) if you have questions or want to add anything to the agenda. Everybody welcome!

Also: "This year the Scholarship Committee would like to announce that there will be a **Fund Raising Auction at this year's Holiday Party**. Everyone is invited to participate by bringing an item or two (or three) to donate - you know: something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue (or green, or red, or pink and orange, or purple...) and lots of cash (or a nice little check)." Contact Barbara

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.

Holstein BarbCPA@att.net or 860-632-7873 or 860-793-4410 or Pamela Guinan pamelacwm@hotmail.com or 860-563-5761 for auction queries. (203) 877-4472 or Gail.Trowbridge@att.net.

20 Thursday 6:30 pm

Pioneer Valley Dinner

(ME, 3rd Thursday) at Joe's Pizza, on Market Street in Northampton, Mass. Join us. Conversations, friendship, solve the world's problems, drink and eat. Questions? MargotZalkind@aol.com

26 Wednesday 12:00 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.

28 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

28 Friday 6:00 pm

Diner Dinner

(semimonthly, 2nd and 4th Fridays) 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. Questions? For info, contact Barb Holstein at 860-632-7873 or 860-793-4410 or email BarbCPA@att.net, Subject: Diner Dinner

31 Monday 5:30 pm

NEW YEARS EVE - CELEBRATED OUR WAY!!

The tradition continues! It's back to Cromwell for C&WM's own unique New Year's Eve bash. Unlike the rest of the nation (M's love to be different), we celebrate New Year's Eve at Greenwich Mean Time - 7 p.m. The party starts anytime after 5:30 p.m. At 7, we uncork the champagne, sing Auld Lang Syne loudly and off-key, hug everyone in sight, & celebrate. We eat around 7:30 ish. By 9 p.m., you're outta' there - plenty of time to go on to another party, celebrate First Night in Hartford, or simply get home before the serious drinkers hit the road.

Wear your absolute fanciest outfit, BYOB, your favorite show-off dinner dish to share, and \$2 for the champagne kitty. RSVP to Barb Holstein - 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net - I need a head count to plan champagne.

Directions: 2 Old Colony Lane, Cromwell. I-91 N or S to Exit 22S onto Rte 9 South toward Middletown. First exit off Rte 9 = West St, Cromwell. Turn Right at end of exit ramp, first Right on Rte 3 No., first Right on Evergreen Rd., & second Right onto Old Colony Lane. #2 is the very first house on the right - gray colonial, pink door, and lots of gargoyles to greet you. Contact me if you need other directions.

Note: This party is typically the largest house party of the year and is an absolute command performance - only a note from your mother or the LocSec will excuse you!!

LOOKING AHEAD - JANUARY

26 Saturday 2:30 pm

Book Discussion

How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci: Seven Steps to Genius Every Day by Michael J. Gelb, at Pam Guinan's house at 2:30 pm on Saturday 1/26/2008. As this is a book of exercises, it might be cool for each of us to select an exercise or two ad libitum, and then share our experiences at the discussion. All welcome to join in (kibitzing specialists included); contact Pam Guinan at 860-563-5761.

FROM THE REGION I VICE CHAIRMAN

Lori Norris

Holiday season is upon us; time to spend with family and friends. For many of us in Mensa, they are one and the same. As Russ Bakke has written several times in his columns, some of us are fortunate to find a Mensa family. For me that includes actual family, as I met my husband, Ron, through Mensa. That feeling of family extends further than to those I count among my close friends. I'm frequently uncomfortable when I walk into a group of Mensans that I don't know, but it usually only takes a short time to feel a part of the group. Walking into an AG or RG is very much like attending a family reunion. This past April, Ron and I attended the Toronto RG. We had met several of the Toronto Mensans at the Quebec City AG seven years ago, and others at a NH/ME or Boston RG. Isn't it amazing how you can walk out of a conversation and pick it up again a few hours, months or years later? Even those we met for the first time at April's RG I now count among my friends and look forward to seeing again. We always eagerly anticipate meeting old friends and making new ones at gatherings, especially the Region 1 RGs.

As for the rest of my family, even though my son Michael is not a member I'm sure he would qualify if he were ever to take the admission test. I joined Mensa when he was 9 years old and he frequently attended events with me, especially games nights and house parties. He grew up being accepted and treated as an equal by adults. I was impressed by his ability at a

young age to interact with these adults on their level. I believe a lot of his self-esteem came from this acceptance and having his opinions treated as worthwhile. I frequently wonder what would have been different in my life if I had this level of acceptance from a similar bunch of adults when I was his age. I definitely came from a family and a society that adhered to the principal that "children should be seen and not heard." What would have been different in my life if I had the support of a flock of accepting and stimulating adults? Parents, please consider involving your children in Mensa events. Some events are family friendly, others are appropriate for older children and, of course, there are gifted children's events in many local groups. If you don't have children, borrow a niece, a nephew or a younger sibling. Not only will the children benefit, but you may as well. Recently, my husband hosted a children's day at the Children's Museum in Providence and I had as much fun as any of the children. Five kids, ranging in age from 3 to 12, attended and I played and learned along with them. After a couple of hours, I was ready for a nap. I look forward to participating in future events and, hopefully, having the opportunity to watch and help these children grow.

Best wishes to you, your family and friends for a wonderful holiday season.

- Lori

THE NOVEMBER DINNER

A History of Connecticut Railroads

At our November dinner, Southern CT Mensa heard from two members of the Board of Directors of the Danbury Railway Museum, Steve Gould, the Secretary of the Museum, and Pete McLachlan, a retired railroad engineer and now a volunteer historian there. Steve and Pete talked about the history of railroads in Connecticut and told us about the work of the Railway Museum in preserving that history.

Pete was no stranger to us, as he gave an entertaining talk about his career in the railroads at our October, 2006 dinner. He worked on the railroads from 1956 to 1998 and was one of the founding members of the Danbury Railway Museum. Steve worked in transportation management for many years with Standard Brands and Pepperidge Farms before retiring in 1999 and becoming a volunteer at the Museum.

Both thoroughly enjoy their work at the Railway Museum. As Steve joked, "If I knew retirement would have been so much fun, I would never have worked." Pete has the same attitude, saying, "When I die, they will probably stuff me and place me at the entrance."

Connecticut Railroads in the 19th Century

Most Fairfield County residents are familiar with the Metro North commuter railroad, which runs from New Haven to Grand Central Station in New York, and has Waterbury, Danbury, and New Canaan branch lines. But Connecticut has a long history of railroads, both freight and commuter, dating back to the 1830s. Steve outlined this history and the developments that eventually led to the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad.

The first railroad charter in Connecticut was the Stonington Railroad, also known as the New York, Providence and Boston Railroad, in 1832. Construction began in Stonington in 1833, and in 1837 the Stonington-Providence line opened. At Providence, passengers could switch to the Providence - Boston line or go to New York City via steamboat.

About the same time, the Hartford - New Haven Railroad began laying track and it commenced service in 1840. A few years later, the New York to New Haven Railroad began operations. Another important early railroad, the Housatonic Railroad, started in 1842 and ran tracks from Bridgeport north, to West Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

In the next 30 years, two Fairfield County rail lines began business, the Danbury and the New Canaan. The Danbury line actually was planned as a "horse railroad" in 1835, Steve said, meaning it was merely horses pulling a cart. But technology soon made this an anachronism. The Danbury Railroad began running in 1852. The New Canaan railroad, going from Stamford to New Canaan, started service in 1868.

In the last half of the 19th century, most of the Connecticut railroads ran into financial difficulty and became part of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad, commonly referred to as the New Haven line. The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad formed in 1872 when the New York and New Haven merged with the Hartford and New Haven Railroad. The New Canaan Railroad leased its lines to the New Haven line in 1884. The Danbury line became part of the Housatonic Railroad in 1886 and the Housatonic leased its lines to the New Haven in 1892. The New York, Providence, and Boston Railroad, in 1892, and the New York and New England Railroad, in 1898, followed suit. When the New Haven and Hartford acquired the Central New England in 1904, it effectively dominated railroading in New England.

A First-Hand Look at the Poughkeepsie Bridge

A major interconnection point for the New York - New Haven -Hartford Railroad was Maybrook in Putnam County, New York. The Danbury rail line carried freight to Maybrook, where connections could be made to westbound railroads to Pennsylvania and other points. The Poughkeepsie Bridge, a single-track railway bridge over the Hudson River, was a vital part of

the line between Danbury and Maybrook. Completed in 1889, it was 2.5 miles long and stood 212 feet above the Hudson. Pete McLachlan piloted trains over this impressive bridge. But as he recalled, he couldn't take much time to appreciate the view. Not when he was pulling eleven tons of freight or 100 rail cars up the incline at a speed of only twelve miles per hour. If he made a mistake, the train's cars could become decoupled and a repair crew would have to be called in to reconnect them. He had to apply his brakes precisely. Pete insisted that it was no big deal, however, saying, "It was a hazard, but with practice, anyone could do it."

The Twentieth Century

In the first three decades of the 20th century, rail transportation was at its peak. Steve gave us one statistic that brought home this point. In 1911, Connecticut railroads had 2,600 passenger cars serving the state. The city of New Haven alone had six railroads. By comparison, today, Amtrak has only 1600 passenger cars nationally.

The railroad dominated transportation and the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad dominated railroads in the area. Besides its main line from New York City to Springfield, Massachusetts, it leased or owned lines to New London, Middletown, Meriden, Waterbury, Providence, Boston, Worcester, and Pittsfield. North and South, East and West, it covered Connecticut.

Technology has a way of upsetting the status quo, however, and Steve's description of the ups and downs of the New Haven Railroad from 1900 through the 1960s illustrated this point. The railroad extended its system and made improvements such as electrifying the route from New Haven to New York. But during World War I, the U.S. government took over the railroad. After the war, the railroad regained its independence and business peaked during the 1920s. Several clouds loomed on the horizon, though - the automobile, the airplane, and the Great Depression.

The Great Depression brought the railroad to a screeching halt. The NY-New Haven-Hartford declared bankruptcy in 1935. Reorganized two

years later, it once again played a major role in war. After the war, it emerged from receivership. But neither freight nor passenger traffic was profitable. Trucks, cars, and planes were taking away business. Mismanagement nearly drove the company into ruins again. The railroad changed managers but the completion of the I-95 highway in the 1950s was the beginning of the end. The highway almost perfectly paralleled the New Haven - New York route and more and more manufacturers decided to ship by truck. Manufacturing's share of the economy also declined. By 1961, the railroad was again bankrupt.

In 1969, the New Haven merged with the Penn Central Railroad. But the Penn Central itself went bankrupt in 1970. In 1971, Amtrak took over inter-city passenger rail service in the U.S. In 1976, the Penn Central was one of six failing Northeast railroads combined and nationalized into Conrail, a government run corporation. In 1983, Conrail gave up its New York - New Haven passenger line to the Metropolitan Transit Authority (New York) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation, which formed the jointly operated Metro-North Railroad. After huge losses in the 1970s, Conrail's fortunes improved in the 1980s, and in 1987 it was sold to private investors. In 1997, two railroads, CSX Transportation and the Norfolk Southern Railway, bought out the stock of Conrail.

Working on the Region's Rails

Pete worked through the years of trouble on the New Haven line, and he had several stories about running steam, diesel, and electric trains. The Danbury line was diesel and electric, having been electrified in 1925. At first, electrically powered trains got their power from a third rail. But this rail was hazardous. Many trains passed through streets, and anything that touched the rail could be electrocuted. Consequently, Connecticut banned the third rail. It was just as well, Pete said, because the third rail was not as efficient as electric overhead wires, which could provide up to 9000 horsepower. But he was wary of electricity; he was shook up by a fireball that he saw jolt a fellow worker once. "Steam was my favorite," Pete concluded, "but electric trains were powerful."

Pete's trains also carried a variety of cargo. He recalled one abrupt message he got one day: "You have the atomic special coming tomorrow." It was an order from the U.S. government telling the railroad it would have to carry nuclear fuel to Groton. But as Pete wryly recalled, this order didn't seem to pull any weight with the Metro North inspectors. They delayed the train for a couple of hours before the word came from on high to let the train through.

The Future of Railroading

The biggest technological improvement in generations was the debut of Amtrak's high-speed Acela train in 2000. This train runs from Boston to Washington. Steve explained that although it's equipped to travel at 150 miles per hour, because of conflicts with local trains and because of old tracks, it only achieves that peak speed during a 12-mile portion of its journey, in Rhode Island. Usually it holds its speed to 135 miles per hour. Still the Acela has cut the time of the New York to Washington commute from four hours down to about 2.5 hours, making it the preferred means of travel to the nation's capital. By comparison, the Metro North commuter line runs at about 95 mph.

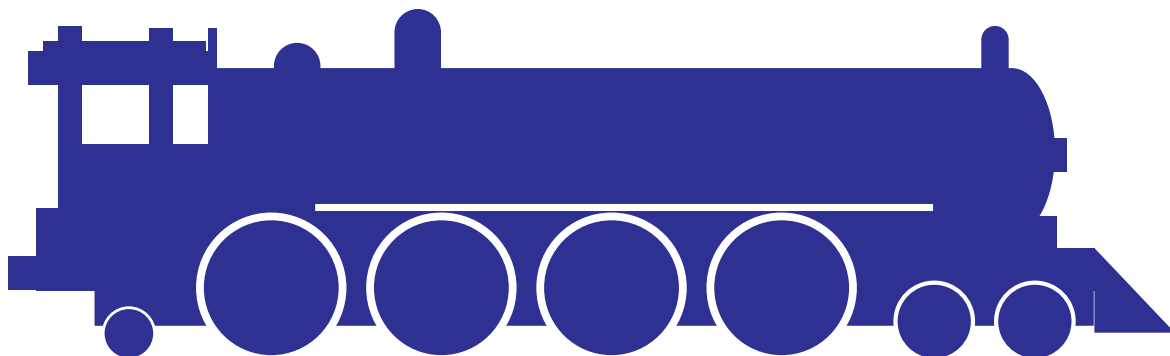
The audience had a few questions about technological changes. Will the railroads be using plastic ties? Yes, Pete said, but they are working on concrete ties. They are also new dynamic brakes that will brake every car on the train very smoothly. This is important, Pete said, when you consider that it took him about 1.25 miles to make an emergency stop when his trains were carrying an eleven-ton load.

Learning More

Steve had with him two books that he recommended for those who want to learn more about the history of Connecticut railroads. The first was *Connecticut Railroads: an Illustrated History: One Hundred Fifty Years of Railroad History*, by Gregg M. Turner, Melancthon W. Jacobus, and Oliver Ormerod Jensen, published by the Connecticut Historical Society. The second book was *Bridging the Hudson - The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge and its Connecting Lines*, by Carleton Mabee, published by Purple Mountain Press Ltd., 2001, 296 pp. This book describes the building of the railroad and the work of people who drove the trains over the bridge.

Both Steve and Pete invited everyone to visit or become a member of the Danbury Railway Museum. Started in 1994, it occupies Danbury's Union Station, which has been placed on the Register of National Historic Places. The Museum has over 600 members, with about 60 members active locally.

All workers at the Museum are volunteers and they perform a variety of tasks for the organization. One job is acquiring old freight cars and other pieces of equipment. The Museum right now has over 60 pieces of equipment. The equipment is donated but must be restored. This requires laborious work by the DRM's volunteers since the equipment often dates back to the 1950s. As Steve and Pete recounted, the Museum sometimes gets very short notice that the equipment is being discarded and must act quickly to obtain it.



One of the museum's pieces of equipment is the giant turntable, which was used to turn railroad cars around to switch tracks. The museum's rail yard also houses over 70 locomotives and cars, and steam and diesel trains. Inside, the DRM has four different railroad models, many rare photos, and slide shows. For train scholars, there are the archives covering the history of the railroads in Connecticut.

It was a pleasure for Southern Connecticut Mensa to conclude its year with another look at the part that railroads have played in Connecticut's history. We hosted a variety of interesting speakers this year and we will have more in 2008. Be sure to check our schedule of upcoming events and join us at our monthly dinners.

The Danbury Railway Museum is located at 120 White St., downtown Danbury, 06810. From November through March, it is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 - 4, and Sunday, 12 - 4. From April to October, the hours are Tuesday through Saturday 10 - 5, and Sunday, 12 - 5. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and students, and \$4 for children ages 3 - 12. You can visit their website www.danbury.org/drm to get more info on the museum.

NEXT DINNER: In January, we will hear from Southern CT Mensan Bob Liftig on "The Loyalists of Fairfield County", the area's citizens who remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution.

Brian Lord is an internationally read cartoonist, writer, 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. His work can be seen at www.KickComics.com

KICK IRRATIONAL by Brian Lord

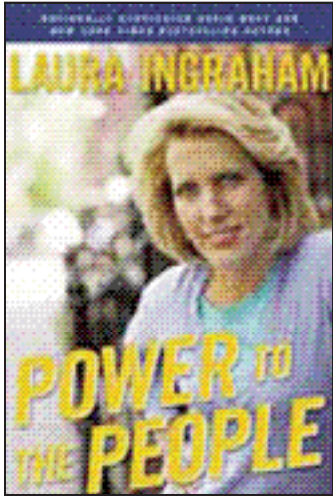
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BOOK REVIEW

By Rick D'Amico

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

by Laura Ingraham

Laura Ingraham worked as a speech-writer for the Reagan Administration during the 1980s. After obtaining her law

degree from University of Virginia School of Law in 1991, she served as a law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. Since 2001, she has hosted The Laura Ingraham Show, which is syndicated on over 300 radio stations. Besides this book, she has written two others: *The Hillary Trap: Looking for Power in All the Wrong Places* (2002) and *Shut Up and Sing* (2003). All three of her books have been *New York Times* bestsellers, and *Power to the People* surged to the top of Amazon's bestsellers only three days after its release.

This book is a figurative call to arms for anyone who thinks that we have given away our power to out-of-touch politicians, runaway judges, and sex-obsessed entertainment execs for too long and that we should try to get it back. Ironically, although intentionally, the title of the book was a leftist chant in the sixties and the title of a John Lennon song in the early seventies.

Ms. Ingraham's passions about traditional moral values, protecting the family, the U.S. Constitution and law, and our seemingly eroding culture are apparent in this book. However, unlike many writers on these subjects, she does more than just rant against what she thinks is wrong. She discusses what individuals and communities can do to support and protect the values that she feels are the true beliefs of mainstream America. Furthermore, she gives examples of grassroots actions that have prevailed over what was ostensibly inevitable.

In the first chapter, "Power to the Family," Ingraham discusses the assault by the left upon the traditional family and how it is impacting

kids. Ironically, she cites how the left attempts to sell its policies by describing them as "for the children." She makes the case for traditional families by pointing out that we teach our children to respect nature when it comes to polar ice caps and whales, but for some reason not with families. She advocates parents being more aware of what information and advice is being offered to their children and provides the names of several organizations that offer assistance.

Another of her topics is illegal immigration. While America has a rich tradition of immigration, and it is important for our continued success as a nation, illegal immigration undermines our society. Although it may allow a farmer to produce lettuce less expensively, the costs of immigration are externalized into increased social services and infrastructure expenses.

She also provides inspirational anecdotes about her recent (and thankfully successful) battle against breast cancer.

While I doubt this book will produce many converts to Ms. Ingram's way of thinking, I do think that it articulates her position clearly and effectively, using statistics to back up her claims. It also takes conservatives, as well as liberals to task, when they are guilty of acting against the interests of the people, for instance, with the Harriet Miers Supreme Court nomination. I think what I liked best about this book was that it actually gives advice on what to do to further the cause. I'd recommend it to all, particularly those who might be apathetic to current events - it's an enlightening experience.

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GOOD WINE CHEAP

(and good food to go with it)

Writing a wine and food column is a great excuse for trying many different wines. Clearly the joy is in the hunt. One thing that I try to do is to sample wines from grapes not marketed widely in the United States. There are literally hundreds of grape varieties used for wine in Europe that are seldom seen in this country. I challenge our readers to go beyond the broadly distributed Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

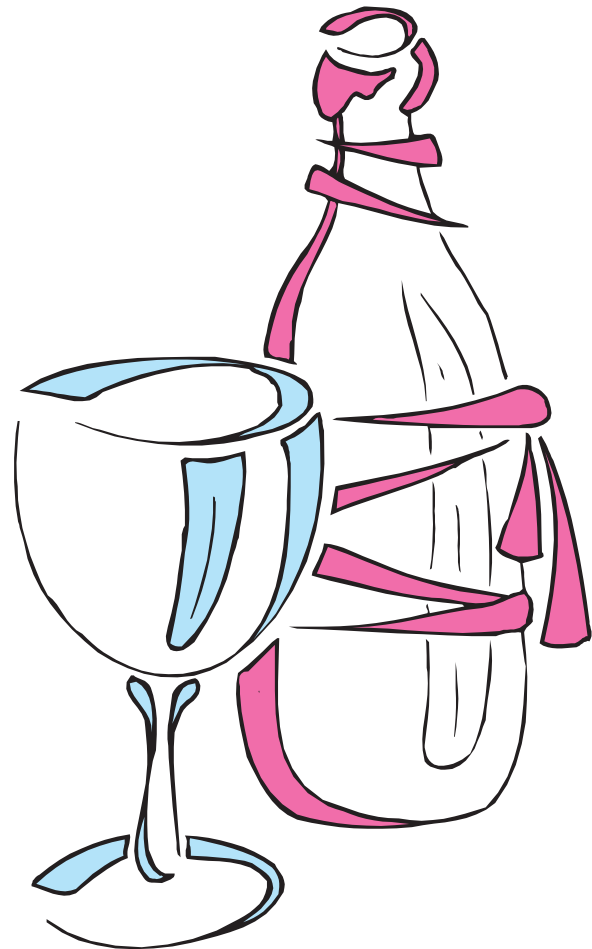
The wine for this month is a white, the 2005 Verdelho from the Stevenot Winery of California. Verdelho is a Portuguese grape rarely but increasingly grown in the United States. Our tasting panel (the Boss and I) debated this wine's characteristics. It has a nose that starts with banana and perhaps vanilla and peach. The taste is clearly tropical fruit, both citrus and a hint of sweeter types such as pineapple. The result is a creamy lighter style that is perfect as an aperitif or with seafood dishes such as below. This wine or some of its Portuguese cousins can be found for around \$10 a bottle. I came across it on sale at a discount shop for \$6.

MARYLAND CRAB CAKES

Ingredients:

8 oz. Lump Crab Meat (fresh or canned)
 1 egg
 1 tsp. Worcestershire
 1/8 tsp. dry mustard
 1 tbs. mayonnaise
 1/ 2 tsp. lemon juice
 1 1/2-tsp. Dijon mustard
 1 1/ 2 -tsp. melted butter
 1/ 2-tsp. dried parsley flakes (or a tbsp of chopped fresh if you have it)
 1/ 2-tsp. Phillips or Old Bay Seafood Seasoning
 1/ 4-cup bread crumbs

Combine all ingredients except crab meat. Mix in crab meat. Shape into cakes (probably six). Pan fry. Serve with fresh lemon wedges and Tartar sauce,



RUMINATIONS

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

From Essays and Tales

by Joseph Addison (1672 - 1719)

"Est brevitae opus", "ut currat sententia",
HOR., Sat. i. 10, 9.

Let brevity despatch the rapid thought.

I have somewhere read of an eminent person who used in his private offices of devotion to give thanks to Heaven that he was born a Frenchman: for my own part I look upon it as a peculiar blessing that I was born an Englishman. Among many other reasons, I think myself very happy in my country, as the language of it is wonderfully adapted to a man who is sparing of his words, and an enemy to loquacity.

As I have frequently reflected on my good fortune in this particular, I shall communicate to the public my speculations upon the English tongue, not doubting but they will be acceptable to all my curious readers.

The English delight in silence more than any other European nation, if the remarks which are made on us by foreigners are true. Our discourse is not kept up in conversation, but falls into more pauses and intervals than in our neighbouring countries; as it is observed that the matter of our writings is thrown much closer together, and lies in a narrower compass, than is usual in the works of foreign authors; for, to favour our natural taciturnity, when we are obliged to utter our thoughts we do it in the shortest way we are able, and give as quick a birth to our conceptions as possible.

This humour shows itself in several remarks that we may make upon the English language. As, first of all, by its abounding in monosyllables, which gives us an opportunity of delivering our thoughts in few sounds. This indeed takes off from the elegance of our tongue, but at the same time expresses our ideas in the readiest manner, and consequently answers the first design of speech better than the multitude of syllables which make the words of other languages more tuneable and sonorous. The sounds of our English words are commonly like

those of string music, short and transient, which rise and perish upon a single touch; those of other languages are like the notes of wind instruments, sweet and swelling, and lengthened out into variety of modulation.

In the next place we may observe that, where the words are not monosyllables, we often make them so, as much as lies in our power, by our rapidity of pronunciation; as it generally happens in most of our long words which are derived from the Latin, where we contract the length of the syllables, that gives them a grave and solemn air in their own language, to make them more proper for despatch, and more conformable to the genius of our tongue. This we may find in a multitude of words, as "liberty," "conspiracy," "theatre," "orator," &c.

The same natural aversion to loquacity has of late years made a very considerable alteration in our language, by closing in one syllable the termination of our preterperfect tense, as in the words "drown'd," "walk'd," "arriv'd," for "drowned," "walked," "arrived," which has very much disfigured the tongue, and turned a tenth part of our smoothest words into so many clusters of consonants. This is the more remarkable because the want of vowels in our language has been the general complaint of our politest authors, who nevertheless are the men that have made these retrenchments, and consequently very much increased our former scarcity.

This reflection on the words that end in "ed" I have heard in conversation from one of the greatest geniuses this age has produced. I think we may add to the foregoing observation, the change which has happened in our language by the abbreviation of several words that are terminated in "eth," by substituting an "s" in the room of the last syllable, as in "drowns," "walks," "arrives," and innumerable other words, which in the pronunciation of our forefathers were "drowneth," "walketh," "arriveth." This has wonderfully multiplied a letter which was before too frequent in the English tongue, and added to that hissing in our language which is taken so much notice of by foreigners, but at the same time humours our taciturnity, and eases us of many superfluous syllables.

I might here observe that the same single letter on many occasions does the office of a whole word, and represents the "his" and "her" of our forefathers. There is no doubt but the ear of a foreigner, which is the best judge in this case, would very much disapprove of such innovations, which indeed we do ourselves in some measure, by retaining the old termination in writing, and in all the solemn offices of our religion.

As, in the instances I have given, we have epitomised many of our particular words to the detriment of our tongue, so on other occasions we have drawn two words into one, which has likewise very much untuned our language, and clogged it with consonants, as "mayn't," "can't," "shan't," "won't," and the like, for "may not," "can not," "shall not," "will not," &c.

It is perhaps this humour of speaking no more than we needs must which has so miserably curtailed some of our words, that in familiar writings and conversations they often lose all but their first syllables, as in "mob.," "rep.," "pos.," "incog.," and the like; and as all ridiculous words make their first entry into a language by familiar phrases, I dare not answer for these that they will not in time be looked upon as a part of our tongue. We see some of our poets have been so indiscreet as to imitate Hudibras's doggrel expressions in their serious compositions, by throwing out the signs of our substantives which are essential to the English language. Nay, this humour of shortening our language had once run so far, that some of our celebrated authors, among whom we may reckon Sir Roger L'Estrange in particular, began to prune their words of all superfluous letters, as they termed them, in order to adjust the spelling to the pronunciation; which would have confounded all our etymologies, and have quite destroyed our tongue.

We may here likewise observe that our proper names, when familiarised in English, generally dwindle to monosyllables, whereas in other modern languages they receive a softer turn on this occasion, by the addition of a new syllable. - Nick, in Italian, is Nicolini; Jack, in French, Janot; and so of the rest.

There is another particular in our language which is a great instance of our frugality in words, and that is the suppressing of several particles which must be produced in other tongues to make a sentence intelligible. This often perplexes the best writers, when they find the relatives "whom," "which," or "they," at their mercy, whether they may have admission or not; and will never be decided till we have something like an academy, that by the best authorities, and rules drawn from the analogy of languages, shall settle all controversies between grammar and idiom.

I have only considered our language as it shows the genius and natural temper of the English, which is modest, thoughtful, and sincere, and which, perhaps, may recommend the people, though it has spoiled the tongue. We might, perhaps, carry the same thought into other languages, and deduce a great part of what is peculiar to them from the genius of the people who speak them. It is certain the light talkative humour of the French has not a little infected their tongue, which might be shown by many instances; as the genius of the Italians, which is so much addicted to music and ceremony, has moulded all their words and phrases to those particular uses. The stateliness and gravity of the Spaniards shows itself to perfection in the solemnity of their language; and the blunt, honest humour of the Germans sounds better in the roughness of the High-Dutch than it would in a politer tongue.

PLEASE NOTE:

In order to address privacy concerns regarding members' personal information appearing in the Chronicle, which is currently available to the general public through the Newsletter archive on the Southern Connecticut Mensa website (<http://scm66.org>), we are about to implement a "Members Only" area. When this feature of the website is activated, the Newsletter Archive will no longer be available to the general public - it will only be available to current SCM members.

During the next few weeks, SCM members who receive the Chronicle via email will receive an email message from Tom O'Neill, the SCM Webmaster. This will include instructions for accessing the "Members Only" area.

If you receive our newsletter via regular mail, we do not have your email address (or were asked not to use it). To gain access to the Members Only area of the site, you will need to contact Tom through the "SCM66 Webmaster" contact link on the homepage of the site.

Once the "Members Only" portion of the website is in place, there are plans to create an online hub, through which SCM members can communicate and exchange ideas and information with one another. Because this area of the site will not be available to the general public, members' privacy will be secured.

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. Compare and contrast indifference and callousness.
2. What percentage of computer hard drives fail each year?
3. Does a belief in Murphy's Law make people less responsible?
4. How many U.S. states have the official title of "commonwealth"?
5. Who was the most underrated inventor of the 20th century?
6. How many states does Amtrak serve?

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

2. Which state is closest to Connecticut in area?
Which state is closest in population?

A: Connecticut ranks 48th in total area, with 14,357 sq. ft. (5,543 sq. m.). The closest state to it in area is Delaware, with 6,447 sq. ft. (2,489 sq. m.). New Jersey is 47th in area with 22,588 sq. ft. (8,721 sq. m.). Puerto Rico, although not a state, is closer to Connecticut in area than any state, with 13,790 sq. ft. (5,324 sq. m.) of territory.

According to 2005 Census estimates, Connecticut ranks 29th in population, with 3,504, 809 people. Oklahoma, which is 28th, is closest to it in population, with 3,579,212 people. Iowa is 30th in population, with 2,982,085 people.

In population density, Connecticut ranks 5th with 702.9 people per sq. mi. (271.4 per sq. km.). The top ten states in population density are: 1) New Jersey, 1,138 /sq. mi. (439.39 / sq. km.) 2) Rhode Island, 1,003.2 / sq. mi. (387.35 / sq. km.) 3) Massachusetts, 809.8 / sq. mi. (312.67 / sq. km.), 4) Connecticut, 702.9 / sq. mi. (271.40 / sq. km) 5) Maryland, 541.9 / sq. mi. (209.23 / sq. km.) 6) New York, 401.9 / sq. mi. (155.18 sq. km.) 7) Delaware, 401.1 / sq. mi. (154.87 / sq. km.) 8) Florida, 296.4 / sq. mi. (114.43 / sq. km.) 9) Ohio, 277.3 / sq. mi. (107.05 / sq. km.) 10) Pennsylvania, 274 / sq. mi (105.80 / sq. km.).

California, the most populous state by far with 36,457, 549 people, is 12th in population density, with 217.1 / sq. mi. (83.85 / sq. km.). Texas, second in population, with 23,507,783 people, ranks only 28th in population density with 79.6 / sq. mi. (30.75 / sq. km.). The U.S. average is 80.7 / sq. mi. (31.17 / sq. km.). Alaska is 47th in population, with 670, 053 people, but dead last in population density, with only 1.1 / sq. mi. (0.42 / sq. km.).

4. Which states does the Mississippi River run through?

A: The Mississippi River runs through 10 states. It begins in northern Minnesota, and then flows south through Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana before spilling into the Gulf of Mexico.

It is the second longest river in the United States, running an estimated 2,320 miles (3,734 km.). The Missouri River runs 2565 miles. The Missouri and Mississippi are sometimes linked as a river system. If combined, they run about 5,970 km., 4th in the world on some lists.

6. Which state has the highest percentage of workers who walk to work?

A: Alaska.

NOTED AND QUOTED

This is the reason we cannot complain of life: it keeps no one against his will.

- Marcus Annaeus Seneca (the Younger), (4/5 B.C.E.? - 65 A.D.), Roman dramatist, poet, philosopher, and statesman

I am a lover of knowledge and the men who dwell in the city are my teachers, and not the trees or the country.

- Socrates, (470 - 399 B.C.E.), quoted in Phaedrus

If a man would register all his opinions upon love, politics, religion, and learning, what a bundle of inconsistencies and contradictions would appear at last! - Jonathan Swift, (1667 - 1745), Irish cleric, satirist, essayist, pamphleteer, and poet

Opinion is a medium between knowledge and ignorance.

- Plato (original name - Aristocles), (428 - 347 B.C.E.),

Fate is the endless chain of causation, whereby things are; the reason or formula by which the world goes on.

- Citium Zeno, (333 - 264 B.C.E.), Greek Stoic philosopher

When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt. - Henry Kaiser, (1872 - 1919), U.S. industrialist

Art is, after nature, the only consolation that one has at all for living.

- Ouida, (1839 - 1908), English novelist and social critic

Too many actors are like the guy who laughs at his own joke and then tells it to you again.

- Roger Ebert, (1942 -), U.S. film critic

It's only the view from where you sit that makes you fear defeat, But life is full of many aisles, so why don't you change your seat?

- Anonymous

We all live in the protection of certain cowardices which we call our principles.

- Mark Twain, (1835 - 1910)

No one ever collapsed under the burdens of a single day. It is when the burdens of tomorrow are added to it that it becomes unbearable.

- Anonymous

Courage is the price life exacts for granting peace. - Amelia Earhart, (1897 - 1937?), U.S. aviator

There are very few monsters who warrant the fear we have of them.

- Andre Gide, (1869 - 1951), French novelist

If I won't be myself, who will?

- Alfred Hitchcock, (1899 - 1980)

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

-George Bernard Shaw, (1856 - 1950), *Maxims for Revolutionists*

It's better to be poor and running your own business than to be rich and work for someone else.

- Calvin Ayre, (1961 -), Canadian entrepreneur, CEO of Bodog.com

What is each man, but a memory for those who follow?

- Frank Herbert, (1920 - 1986), science fiction author, *Dune*

The man who never feels weakness will never know strength. -Kristoffer Uppdal, (1878 - 1961), Norwegian novelist and poet

Few men of action have been able to make a graceful exit at the appropriate time. - Malcolm Muggeridge, (1903 - 1990), English journalist and novelist

There is false modesty, but there is no false pride. - Jules Renard, (1864 - 1910), French novelist and playwright

An original writer is not one who imitates nobody, but one whom nobody can imitate.

- Vicomte de Chateaubriand, (1768 - 1848), French writer and politician

My music is best understood by children and animals.

- Igor Stravinsky, (1882 - 1971), Russian composer

I postpone death by living, by suffering, by error, by risking, by giving, by losing.

- Anais Nin, (1903 - 1977), French-born American novelist

Civilization is the making of civil persons.

- John Ruskin, (1819 - 1900), English critic, essayist, and reformer

POETRY CORNER**THE INNOVATOR**

(A Pharaoh Speaks)

Stephen Vincent Benét (1898 -1 943)

I SAID, "Why should a pyramid
Stand always dully on its base?
I'll change it! Let the top by hid,
The bottom take the apex-place!"
And as I bade they did.

The people flocked in, scores on scores,
To see it balance on its tip.
They praised me with the praise that bores,
My godlike mind on every lip.
- Until it fell, of course.

And then they took my body out
From my crushed palace, mad with rage,
- Well, half the town was wrecked, no doubt—
Their crazy anger to assuage
By dragging it about.

The end? Foul birds defile my skull.
The new king's praises fill the land.
He clings to precepts, simple, dull;
His pyramids on bases stand.
But - Lord, how usual!

THE LAZY ROOF

Frank Gelett Burgess (1866-1951)

THE Roof it has a Lazy Time
A-lying in the Sun;
The Walls they have to Hold Him Up;
They do Not Have Much Fun!

MUSIC

Charles Baudelaire (1821 - 1867)

MUSIC doth uplift me like a sea
Towards my planet pale,
Then through dark fogs or heaven's infinity
I lift my wandering sail.

With breast advanced, drinking the winds that flee,
And through the cordage wail,
I mount the hurrying waves night hides from me
Beneath her sombre veil.

I feel the tremblings of all passions known
To ships before the breeze;
Cradled by gentle winds, or tempest-blown

I pass the abysmal seas
That are, when calm, the mirror level and fair
Of my despair!

FREDERICKSBURG

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836 - 1906)

THE increasing moonlight drifts across my bed,
And on the churchyard by the road, I know
It falls as white and noiselessly as snow. . . .
'T was such a night two weary summers fled;
The stars, as now, were waning overhead.
Listen! Again the shrill-lipped bugles blow
Where the swift currents of the river flow
Past Fredericksburg; far off the heavens are red
With sudden conflagration; on yon height,
Linstock in hand, the gunners hold their breath;
A signal rocket pierces the dense night,
Flings its spent stars upon the town beneath:
Hark! - the artillery massing on the right,
Hark! - the black squadrons wheeling down to Death!

MENSA MIND GAMES 2007 RESULTS

More than 200 Mensans gathered in Pittsburgh in April for Mensa Mind Games 2007. During the three-day event, members played and rated 59 board and card games. The top five games have earned Mensa Select distinction and may use the Mensa Select seal on their games.

MIND GAMES 2008 will be held April 11-13 in Phoenix.

To register, visit
<http://www.mindgames.us.mensa.org> FAX 1-603-286-2093 PHONE 1-800-MENSA4U
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MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

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www.pywacketgames.com

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www.zmangames.com

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www.gamewright.com

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www.mindwareonline.com

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www.outsetmedia.com

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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

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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.

Change of Address

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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