

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.



ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE CHRONICLE

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.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Schedule of Mensa Events	15	Word Check
6	RV Chat	16	Treasury Report
	Puzzles		Mind Games Results
7	Puzzles Answers		Chapter Notes
8	October Dinner	17	Member Advertisements
13	Noted and Quoted	18	List of Officers

Admitted in CT, NY & OR

Sharon Oberst DeFala, Esq.
GENERAL PRACTICE OF LAWLaw Offices
Gary Oberst
A Professional Corporation
111 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851Office (203) 866-4646
Home (203) 852-9571
Fax (203) 852-1574
sharon@oberstlaw.com**SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS - JANUARY**

Tuesday, January 11, 7:00 pm

Post Road DinnerChuck's Steak House, 1340 Boston Post Rd.
Darien, CT 06820. Restaurant closes at 9:30 on
Tue. Contact Jim Mizera: jmizera@hotmail.com
or (203) 522-1959 for reservations or info.

Friday, January 14, 7:00

**Danbury Dinner - Southern Connecticut and
Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner**at a new venue, The Pasta Garden, 174 Federal
Rd, Brookfield CT 06804 (restaurant phone:
(203) 775-0426). Interested M's should contact
Ward Mazzucco at 203-744-1929, ext 25,
wjm@danburylaw.com or Rev. Bill Loring at
203-794-1389, fr.bill@comcast.net for more info
on location and/or reservations.

Saturday, January 15, 6:15 pm

Monthly Dinner - New Members DinnerMembers old and new are invited to attend
Southern CT Mensa's first dinner of 2011. The
Putnam House Restaurant, The Seelye Room, 12
Depot Place, Bethel (downtown - across from
old railroad station), CT 06801 (www.theputnam-
house.com - Dinner Menu 1 - a vegetarian
option is on the menu.). Dress is casual. Before
the presentation, we will enjoy dinner. There is
parking in the rear of the restaurant and in the
nearby Old Railroad Station lot. TOPIC: Jerry
Brooker will speak about his recent trip to the
Himalayas, where he visited Bhutan, Tibet,
Nepal and its capital Kathmandu, and Mt.
Everest. Contact Jim Mizera at jmizera@hot-
mail.com or (203) 522-1959 for reservations or
info. Reservations are encouraged but not
required. In case of severe weather, please call
to confirm that the event is going on as sched-
uled.**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, 860-888-
9867, email: lilith@beadylittleskies.com.**JANUARY**

1 Saturday 11:00 - 3:00

New Year's Day Brunch & Installation of Officersat 1 Essex Road in Old Saybrook, CT 06475. All
Welcome, RSVP to Ann Fitzgerald at 860-388-
1893 or annely@comcast.net for directions.

5, 12, 19, 26 Wednesdays 6:30 - 9:00 pm

Open Mike Night(WE) at Peaberry's Coffee Shop on Rte 10 in
between Fitzgeralds Market and CVS, Simsbury,
CT. This is a regular musician event. If you
want to see MensaFran make a fool out of her-
self, this is the place. Great munchies, coffee,
tea, freeziedrinks and stuff. No alcohol. Fun
people. Fran Devevo 860-738-8488 leave a mes-
sage, calls returned about 9 pm or weekends or
email mensafran@yahoo.com

6, 13, 20, 27 Thursdays 6:30 pm

Scrabble(WE) at the Fellowship Housing clubhouse, 24
Starkel Road, West Hartford (it's the small build-
ing right where the road bends). For more info
contact Lois Cappellano 413-567-4702

7 Friday 5:30 pm

Happy Hour in Wallingford(ME, 1st Fridays) Ann Polanski (contact her at
203-269-4565 or cell 860-817-9910 or ann.polans-
ki@comcast.net) at The Old Dublin, 171
Quinnipiac Street, Wallingford, CT 06492, 203-
949-8022, www.theolddublin.com From Route
15: Take exit 64 toward Wallingford/ Downtown,
Sharp right at Quinnipiac Street, At 0.3 miles
turn left to stay on Quinnipiac Street. The Old
Dublin will be on the left about 0.3 miles from
where you turned left
From I-91: Take I-91 to exit 13 Turn right at end
of exit onto South Colony Road. At about 0.2
miles, turn left onto Quinnipiac Street
(Wallingford center, just before the gazebo). The

Old Dublin will be on your right within about two blocks.

8 Saturday 9:00 am

Breakfast

At the New London Diner, 566 Colman Street in New London, CT, featuring good, inexpensive food, a huge parking lot and delightful conversation. From points East: take I-95 south to Exit 83, N Frontage Rd. Follow this to the Colman St/US-1 ramp and turn left at the traffic light at the end of the ramp onto Colman St. Go through the next two traffic lights (very close together) and the Diner will be on the right hand side. From points West: take I-95 north to Exit 82A, S Frontage Rd. Take Vauxhall, which will fork off to the right. Then in about 1.4 miles, turn right onto Colman Street. The Diner is on the right side of Colman. Contact Roger Richards at (860)572-1525 or richardsrt@snet.net for further information.

8 Saturday time TBA

Mensa Admissions Testing

C&WM Mensa now holds regular testing in Newington, CT on the second Saturday of every month. Please preregister to attend by contacting the testing Proctor Coordinator, David B. Collier at Testing@CWM.US.Mensa.org for more details, including directions. In addition to the regular testing, additional tests will be made available around the region as candidate interest requires. To register for testing updates, go to <http://www.us.mensa.org/directtesting> and provide an email address. You can also save time at the site by paying for your testing session online at www.us.mensa.org/testingvoucher.

9 Sunday 12:30 pm

Indian Lunch

(ME, 2nd Sunday) Meet us at Haveli India Restaurant for an all you can eat Indian buffet for only \$9.95! The food is fabulous and the restaurant is conveniently located at 1300 South Main St., Rte 17 in South Middletown. Call Barb Holstein for a reservation, 860-632-7873 or BarbCPA@att.net. To read about the restaurant, or get directions, check www.haveliindia.com

12 Wednesday 5:30 pm

Shoreline Happy Hour

(ME, 2nd Wednesday) in Branford at The Donovan's Reef www.donovans-reef.com web site has a small map, and here are some directions with distances - from I-95 take exit 54/Cedar Street. Proceed south on Cedar Street, crossing Route 1 (North Main Street) for about 0.5 mi. to Rose Street. Take a left on Rose, pass the Post Office on your right and go 0.25 mi. to a driveway on the right where you will enter the parking lot for a number of businesses in a complex known as Lockworks Square. Donovan's Reef is partway through on the left. Locals can also enter Lockworks Square from the Ivy Street side just off of Main Street. Shoreline Foods faces Ivy. The lounge is on the left inside. We usually reserve the round table in the corner (with potential to annex adjacent ones) and will likely have an "M" sign visible. We start around 5:30. There are free daily bar munchies and numerous tasty items in the comprehensive and modestly priced menu. Hope to see you there! Questions? Contact Mike Wilson at 203-481-2858 or MahoutMike@aol.com

14 Friday 6:30 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 Howard Brender at 860-635-5673 or howiebren@aol.com Subject: Diner Dinner

14 Friday 7:00 pm

The Architecture of Andrea Palladio

featured lecture at Essex Meadows, 30 Bokum Road in Essex. Dr. Victor Deupi will speak on, "the Architecture of Andrea Palladio", the 16th century Venetian who is widely considered the single most influential figure in all of Western Architecture. His ideas inspired the US Capitol, and we still speak with admiration of Palladian windows. This event is part of the Centerbrook Architects Lecture Series. From Middletown, take Rte 9S to exit 3, go straight at the end of the ramp to blinking light. Go Right onto Rte

153 for a little over 1 mile, then left onto Bokum. Essex Meadows is about 1/3 mile on your right. Contact Ann Fitzgerald at 860-388-1893 or annelly@comcast.net with ?? or concerns.

16 Sunday 11:30 am

Lunch & Billings Farm Sleigh Ride Weekend

at Allechante Restaurant in Woodstock, VT. In January, we'll gather in Woodstock for an early lunch (11:30) at Allechante, 61 Central Street, Woodstock, VT. They have counter service only, but there are tables to sit at and all the food is fabulous. And, people can choose just a hot drink and a pastry or soup, salad, & sandwiches. About 3-5 minute drive from Billings Farm and surrounded by quaint shops.

www.allechantevt.com/Cafe.php

The whole weekend, January 15, 16, 17 is Sleigh Ride Weekend at Billings Farm and Museum where there will be horse-drawn sleigh rides through the frosty farm fields, sledding with jack jumper sleds; visits to the dairy farm and restored farmhouse; farm programs and hands-on activities. 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

www.billingsfarm.org/index.html In addition, there are many other nearby attractions. RSVP to Hope Moffat hopenmoffat@hotmail.com or 802-234-5550

20 Thursday 6:30 pm

Pioneer Valley Dinner

(ME, 3rd Thursday) at the delightful Tavern on the Hill perched on the shoulder of Mount Tom, conveniently located on Route 141 between Easthampton and Holyoke. In order to fully appreciate the view and the sunset, we will be meeting there a half-hour earlier than usual, at 6:00 pm. Of course, if you want to come earlier and enjoy the view of the valley, or the view of the well-stocked bar, you'll probably find company! All are welcome, please email Ian Fraser ianfraser@usa.net for more info or directions.

28 Friday 5:00 pm

Happy Hour

(ME, 4th Friday) at Harry's Sports Grill in The Holiday Inn in North Haven, web site www.harryssportsgrill.com. Come on down and join us this month, we'd love to see ya. Contact Gail Trowbridge 203-877-4472 or gail_trowbridge@yahoo.com

28 Friday 6:30 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 Howard Brender at 860-635-5673 or howiebren@aol.com Subject: Diner Dinner

LOOKING AHEAD

February 5 Saturday 2:30 pm

Book Discussion

Join us at Pamela Guinan's home, 323 Griswold Road, Wethersfield, CT, for a discussion of Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us by Daniel H. Pink. RSVP to Pam Guinan 860-563-5761 or Pamela.cwm@hotmail.com

From Publishers Weekly:

According to Pink (A Whole New Mind), everything we think we know about what motivates us is wrong. He pits the latest scientific discoveries about the mind against the outmoded wisdom that claims people can only be motivated by the hope of gain and the fear of loss. Pink cites a dizzying number of studies revealing that carrot and stick can actually significantly reduce the ability of workers to produce creative solutions to problems. What motivates us once our basic survival needs are met is the ability to grow and develop, to realize our fullest potential. Case studies of Google's 20 percent time (in which employees work on projects of their choosing one full day each week) and Best Buy's Results Only Work Environment (in which employees can work whenever and however they choose-as long as they meet specific goals) demonstrate growing endorsement for this approach. A series of appendixes include further reading and tips on applying this method to businesses, fitness and child-rearing. Drawing on research in psychology, economics and sociology, Pink's analysis-and new model-of motivation offers tremendous insight into our deepest nature.

Here is a summary from Wikipedia on this New York Times and Wall Street Journal best seller: The book examines the scientific literature on motivation, outlines the perils of extrinsic motivators (in particular, money), and proposes what Pink terms "Motivation 3.0" that leverages the

three key elements of truly effective motivation: autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Drive concludes with a toolkit of ways individuals, managers, parents, and companies can intensify their use of effective motivators and decrease their dependence on extrinsic motivators

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

February 18 – 20, 2011

MENSA COLLOQUIUM: "Electronic Gaming and Its Impact on Society"

Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark in Austin, Texas. Visit <http://www.colloquium.us.mensa.org> for all the details and to register. Instead of focusing on the "whats" of individual games, this Colloquium will consider our societal obsession with electronic gaming, how we got to this point, and what the future could bring -- the "hows" and "whys," if you will. And the rock-bottom registration rate is only \$169 through next Saturday, July 31! Sponsored by the Mensa Foundation as an educational outreach program, the weekend-long Colloquium event historically provides Mensans and the public alike the opportunity to gather with industry experts and researchers to dig deeper into socially relevant (and often controversial) topics.

February 18 – 20, 2011

New Hampshire RG 2011 "Mediterranean on the Atlantic"

Location: Best Western Wynwood Hotel & Suites
580 US Route 1, Portsmouth, NH
PLEASE CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY
FOR DISCOUNT ROOM RATE (603) 436-7600

Ask for "NH Mensa Regional Gathering"
Single/Double (adults) \$79.95 + tax (\$5.00 each
add'l adult per room)

Make your hotel reservations early (you can
always cancel if necessary). Without a reservation
you may be locked out of our special rate,
or may not be able to get a room at all!

For more info: contact Deb Stone @ (603) 856-
7055 or nhr@gstonesrealm.com or Holly Green
@ (603) 724-8630 or RGChair@nh.us.mensa.org

Registrar: Deb Stone, 6 Fox Meadow Drive, Bow,
NH 03304, (603) 856-7055,
nhr@gstonesrealm.com

Registration: \$65 until 01/15/2011, \$75 thereafter
and at the door (All meals included)

8-17 years old, \$15 less than standard adult rate,
18-20 years old \$10 less than standard adult
rate. Children under 8, free. Day rates available
(please contact registrar.)

April 1 - 3, 2011

GREATER NEW YORK MENSA REGIONAL GATHERING

A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND - LET'S GATHER
IN THE VALLEY!

CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL - WHITE PLAINS, NY
RG WEBSITE: www.anewyorkstateofmind.org
A WEEKEND OF GREAT SPEAKERS, ROUND-THE-
CLOCK HOSPITALITY, AN AMAZING GAMES
ROOM, CONTESTS, TRIVIA, SATURDAY NIGHT
DJ, WINE TASTING, AND SO MUCH MORE!
RESERVATIONS

\$40 through 12/31/2010, \$50 through 3/31/2011

\$55 onsite for weekend, \$40 Saturday only
HOTEL RESERVATIONS: \$109/night S/D/T/Q

Call 1-800-227-6963 or 1-914-682-0050 or
www.crowneplaza.com/whiteplainsny

Use hotel registration code M12

Questions? Call RG Chair Vicki Goldberger (516)
935-1613 or vgoldberger@gmail.com



FROM THE REGIONAL VICE CHAIRMAN**LORI NORRIS****RVCHAT**

Happy New Year. The start of a new year always brings hope of change and good times. Whether you are a new member, a long-time member, an active member or an inactive member - treat yourself to what Mensa has to offer. Take a look at your local calendar (or the national one) and try an event that you haven't attended before. Or maybe you want to see something on the calendar that isn't there now; would you like to host an event - go snowshoeing with friends, enjoy a hot toddy in front of a roaring fire, go to a public lecture, try a new restaurant. It's easy, just contact your calendar editor and ask how to put something on the calendar.

Upcoming regional events to look forward to include: New Hampshire Mensa's Regional Gathering (RG) in February, always a great time; Greater New York Mensa will be hosting an RG the first weekend in April; and then there is Boston Mensa's Mini-RG on Cape Cod in May. Slightly outside our region, but nearby, Central New Jersey Mensa will be hosting Snowball in

early March. If you've never been to an RG but have wondered what they're all about, take a weekend, mix in a bunch of like-minded people, add intellectual stimulation, good food, chocolate, a variety of speakers, games and lots of conversation on every imaginable topic and you have an RG. Shy - give me a call and I'll look for you and introduce you around. Come to one RG and you'll be back for more.

In April, Mensa of Northeastern New York will be holding one of my favorite national events: MindGames™; an opportunity to test new games and vote on the games that will be awarded the Mensa SelectÆ seal. On a local level, many of the scholarship chairs are looking for judges for the annual scholarship competition; you may want to contact your local chair and see if your assistance would be needed.

Lori J. Norris
RVC - 1

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. What is the difference between analyzing and contemplating?
2. Estimate when these companies began: IBM, 3M, General Mills, Radio Shack, Bank of America, Colgate-Palmolive., Raytheon, Perkin-Elmer.
3. How can people best manage their time?
4. On average, how long does it take for a U.S. patent to be approved?
5. How (in what paths) do most people walk through a department store?
6. What percentage of U.S. men are 6 feet tall or taller?

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

2. How much did Henry David Thoreau spend to build his house on Walden Pond ?

A: \$28.12 1/2 (one-half cent).

4. What is the driest continent on earth?

A: Antarctica, which includes the South Pole, is the driest continent. Its annual precipitation is only about 8 inches along the coast and much less inland. The South Pole gets only about 4 inches of precipitation per year. About 98% of it is covered in ice, which averages about 1 foot in thickness. It is the fifth biggest continent but it has no permanent residents and only about 1,000 - 5,000 people go there per year.

Australia is the driest inhabited continent and the one with the least fertile soil. 80% of the country gets less than 24 inches of rain per year. Its area is almost 3 million square miles (7.6 million km.) but only about 6.5% of it is arable. This makes it the sixth largest country. If considered a continent, it is the smallest but if considered an island, it is the world's biggest, ahead of second-place Greenland (2.1 million sq. mi.)

The largest part is the outback - desert or semi-arid lands in the interior, which constitute about 75% of the country. The Australian Alps is the only area of the continent that gets snow. Only the southwest and the southeast corners of the continent have a temperate climate. Accordingly, most of Australia's population of 22 million lives along the southeastern coastline, making it the world's most urbanized country, with 70% of the population living in the 10 largest cities.

6. How many bridges are there in Connecticut?

A: According to the state government, there are 5,300 bridges in Connecticut. The average age of bridges in Connecticut is 40 years. 46% of them were built before 1960. The state ranks 10% of the state's bridges as being in poor condition, 54% in fair condition, and 36% in good condition.

9. How many Europeans are there?

A: In 2005, the United Nations estimated that there were 731 million people living within the area of what has been considered geographically Europe. As of 2008, there were about 500 million people in the countries of the European Union (E.U.), and about 95 million in countries within Europe proper but not in the E.U.

The 2005 U.N. estimate includes less than half of the people who live in transcontinental countries that cover both Europe and Asia (Eurasia). A 2009 estimate that covered all of Europe's approximately 50 countries, including all of Russia and Turkey, put the population at 831 million, about 13% of the world's population.

Russians are the largest ethnic group in Europe, comprising 105 million people, followed by Germans (80 million), French (65 million), British (61 million), Italians (60 million), Ukrainians (45 million), Spanish (44 million), and Polish (40 million).

A century ago, Europe's population was about 25% of the world's total. Many demographers estimate that Europe's share of the global population will decline to about 7% by 2050. Nine of the ten countries with the oldest median age of the population are in Europe. (Japan has the oldest population).

Europe is the second smallest of the seven continents in area, occupying less than 7% of the world's land area and only about 2% of the surface area. It is the third largest in population, behind Asia (4 billion) and Africa (1 billion).

The E.U., which excludes many eastern European countries, recognizes 23 official languages in Europe (2007) but there are about 30 - 40 major languages on the continent. In the E.U., 19% of the people have German as their native language, 13% French, 12% English, and 11% Italian. About 49% of the E.U.'s peoples can speak English, about 35% German, and about 26% French.

THE OCTOBER DINNER

THE ART, SCIENCE, AND PSYCHOLOGY OF SONGWRITING

At our October dinner, we heard from a master of his craft, Bill Pere, who is President and Executive Director of the Connecticut Songwriters Association (CSA). Although the turnout was poor, Bill gave the people who came an excellent presentation on all the elements that go into a polished song and showed just what a balancing act it is.

It would be hard to find a person better qualified to talk about songwriting, as Mr. Pere is a prolific songwriter, with more than 400 songs, 16 CD's, and 20 stage plays to his credit. He has been active in CSA since its founding in 1979, helping hundreds of songwriters throughout the state with his personal advice, his insights in 100 articles, and his book on songwriting, *The "Songcrafters' Coloring Book"*, an invaluable guide for both beginners and veteran writers. He was twice voted Connecticut Songwriter of the Year. Recognizing his accomplishments, the Connecticut Commission on the Arts in 1995 named him an Official Connecticut State Troubadour. Bill is more than a local legend, however, as he has been called on to work with many Grammy, Tony, and Emmy-award winning artists. He was voted Independent Artist of the Year in 2003 at the national Independent Music Conference in Philadelphia, and was acclaimed as "one of the top 50 Innovators, Groundbreakers, and Guiding Lights of the Music Industry" by Music Connection Magazine.

Not one to simply bask in the limelight, Bill has used his musical talents to help the poor as Founder and Executive Director of the Local United Network to Combat Hunger (LUNCH). His group produces concerts and theater events to raise money for the hungry and the homeless (Go to the website at www.lunchensemble.com).

AN ARTIST AND SCIENTIST AT WORK

BILL started his outline by declaring that a song is the sum of its parameters. Parameters? "Are we talking about a song or a computer program?" some Mensans were probably wondering. But Bill showed how this technical term is very apt for music. A parameter, he explained, is

just a factor with values or settings that can change or remain constant. Any artistic work, he continued, has parameters. A painting, for instance, has subject matter, color, texture, and several other considerations. Similarly, a novel has subject matter, setting, and point of view, among other things. Changing just one of the parameters can change the style. For illustration he imagined two novels that have the same characterization and time flow (e.g., sequential, flashback, etc.) but differ in setting - one taking place in the Old West and one in a science fiction future. Surely a reader would consider them distinct novels and judge them quite differently despite their similarities.

Just like a painting or a novel, Mr. Pere said, a song has parameters. But what makes songwriting a particularly complex art form is that it must harmonize linguistic and musical parameters. A songwriter is more than a poet for he must match lyrical rhythms with the rhythms of musical instruments.

It's not surprising that Bill would draw on technology and analogy to lucidly describe songwriting because he is both a scientist and an artist. A native New Yorker, he started writing songs in his teens. But he had scientific talents as well and earned a graduate degree in molecular biology. After college, he came to Connecticut to design computer systems in bioinformatics for a pharmaceutical company. While pursuing his creative scientific vocation, he ventured further into his musical avocation by joining the newly founded Connecticut Songwriters Association. Now retired from computing, he continues his musical efforts with CSA, sharing his learning and experience with fellow songwriters and would-be songwriters. It's no wonder that the New York Times said, "Bill Pere embodies the link between music and science."

THE ANATOMY OF A SONG

WHAT does it take to make a great song? Unfortunately, many pros can't seem to explain it. "None of the great songwriters can say or describe how they do it - they just say they have right instincts," Bill reported. This isn't very helpful to most people, he rightly said, because "most people don't have great instincts." So how can they write songs?

Fortunately, songwriting is more than just an instinct. Songwriters may be inspired by an idea, but they must sit down and shape and optimize the song, Bill said. This is where the intricate balancing act begins.

The anatomy of a song has many parts. Indeed, when Mr. Pere pulled out a chart showing the many elements to consider, someone in the audience quipped, "It looks like aircraft carrier." Actually, it looked more like a flowchart of a very complex computer system, complete with a revision number (4.0), dozens of boxes, and arrows.

To simplify this complex chart, Bill grouped the parameters of a song into three main categories: lyrical, musical, and whole song. Drilling down further, he classified lyrical factors into three general divisions: semantic - dealing with meaning, prosodic - dealing with the rhythm of words and phrases, and phonetic, which focuses on the sound and structure of words. Proceeding to the musical parameters, he placed them into five 'buckets': 1) melody - the distance in time between notes and the range in notes, 2) harmony -, the musical distance between coinciding pitches, 3) rhythm - the division of time into units, 4) dynamics - the loudness or softness - the variation in amplitude, and 5) timbre - the shape of the sound waves. Finally, he outlined the 'whole song' parameters - those variables that apply to the entire song. These include both lyrical and musical features, things like subject matter or focus, point of view, tone, time progression, format (story or list), and structure. These are just the general categories; within each category are numerous parameters. The possible combinations are endless.

It's an enormous task to take in all these interacting variables. Where to start? "What do you write first - the music or the lyrics?" someone asked. "It could be either," Bill said. "I sometimes start with the lyrics and sometimes the music." The main thing is not the order but the attention given to each piece.

EXPRESSION VS. COMMUNICATION

BEFORE you start writing songs, MR. Pere suggested pondering an essential question: What is

the difference between expression and communication? One Mensan hit the nail on the head when he responded, "Expression is for you, communication is for the audience." Understanding this distinction can make the difference between failure and success in songwriting. As Bill emphasized, "Your song needs to forge connections with your listening audience." Unfortunately, he lamented, many aspiring songwriters today just want to "express themselves." They don't like to think of how to communicate so that their listeners can understand. They are almost oblivious to their audience, disdaining even the critiques of fellow songwriters. Our speaker criticized this attitude, asking, "If you're talking to someone and they misunderstand you, do you just say 'OK'?" Of course not. Yet Bill finds that when he asks songwriters what their song is about, many don't know. If they don't know, it's hard to believe that their audience will. A songwriter has to think about his message, how he wants to present it, and whom they want to say it to. Bill suggested the stranger test: If a stranger spoke to you in your lyrics, would you stick around? If not, rethink your song.

HOW LISTENERS LISTEN TO LYRICS

BESIDES bringing a scientist's mind to songwriting, Bill Pere also draws on psychological training he received in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality test. According to Myers-Briggs theory, people prefer to think and act in certain ways and these preferences can be measured in four characteristics to construct a personality type profile. People are either 1) extroverted (E) or introverted (I) in how they focus their energy; 2) Sensory (S) or Intuitive (N) in what they pay attention to; 3) Thinkers (T) or Feelers (F) in how they decide and judge; and 4) Judges (J) or Perceivers (P) in what they emphasize in life. All of these facets of the psyche are important, but for songwriters, what's most important to know is that MBTI tests indicate that 70% of people are sensory. Sensory people pay attention to details and objects while intuitive people look at concepts, ideas, and the big picture. It's not just MBTI that tells us this. Bill cited a Harvard psychological study that reached the same conclusion: 70% of the general population prefers to receive information in concrete ways while only 30% prefers abstract informa-

tion. The lesson: to get their message across to most people, songwriters should use concrete words - words that appeal to at least one of the five senses.

The concrete-minded majority raises a couple of problems for songwriters, Bill said. First, many songwriters are abstract, intuitive thinkers. They often get frustrated dealing with concrete, sensory-minded people. They can start with the abstract but they have to work down to the details. To check themselves, Bill suggested that writers should actually count the number of concrete words they use. Secondly, whatever a writer's MBTI profile, the message of his or her song, what it is ABOUT, will almost certainly be abstract. "If it's all concrete, your song isn't about anything," Bill remarked. Love, he said, is the most common song theme, followed by rejection and loneliness. But writers can't just write abstract words about these abstract feelings; they must convey their message with concrete words if they want to reach a general audience. They must paint images in song. Bill summed it up nicely: "The art of songwriting is translating from the abstract to the concrete. The golden rule of songwriting is SHOW, don't tell." The need to strike the right balance between the abstract and the concrete is one of the things that make songwriting such an art.

To translate the abstract into the concrete, songwriters must use metaphors. Metaphors equate A with B. Both A and B can be abstract or both can be concrete, but metaphors work best when A is abstract and B is concrete. Not just any abstract - concrete metaphor will do, however. Metaphors should be consistent throughout a song. They should all fall within what Bill called the "semantic field" of the song - the vocabulary suggested by the main metaphor. Bill warned, "The worst thing a songwriter can do is to mix metaphors" Loneliness can't be compared to ice in one line and lice in another. This would just leave the audience confused. "The average person doesn't want to struggle to try understand lyrics," Bill reminded us. Confusing metaphors will scare him off.

Bill said that since it's difficult for many writers to use a semantic field, it's useful to collaborate with songwriters with different styles. Digging a little deeper into Myers-Briggs psychology, he

added, "If you put different people together, you get better results if there is more conflict." Songwriting works best when it combines all eight Myers-Briggs characteristics - the introvert's reflection, the extrovert's drive, the sensor's eye for detail, the intuitive person's creativity, the feeling person's emotion, the thinker's clarity and precision, and the perceiver's flexibility. One writer won't have all these strengths; a diverse group very well may.

While the songwriter must use familiar details and words so that listeners can understand, he must do something that will make his song stand out - another artistic balancing act. Bill told us, "The bottom line in a song is distinction. It's generally good to have at least one unusual word or one unusual chord in your song." It's something that helps it stick in the listener's mind.

FORMATS AND TYPES

ANOTHER area Bill delved into was song format. There are two types of song formats: list songs, which convey one idea but don't tell a story, and story songs. List songs have a main point that they state in a one verse or in a verse and chorus. Subsequent verses restate the main point but in a distinct way, probably using different but consistent metaphors. Story songs tell a tale. Each verse should be essential to the tale. The story must progress in time while using sounds and symbols consistently. Harry Chapin was a master of this format, someone many songwriters, including Mr. Pere, draw on for inspiration.

Songs can also be classified by type: attitudinal, situational, or story. Bill described how each of these song types has a different effect that stays with the listener for a different time. The attitudinal song evokes a specific feeling and when the song is done, it's out of your mind. The situational song evokes a specific thought, which lingers after the song. Finally, the story song makes a person act - it inspires, and the effect can stay with you for life. To achieve the greater impact of the situational song and the story song, however, the songwriter must put in a correspondingly greater effort.

STORIES: THE 'W' QUESTIONS

A SONGWRITER doesn't have as much time as other artists to reach his audience. Since songs are usually just three and a half minutes long, the songwriter with a story has to get the situation across quickly. Like a short-story writer or novelist, he has to answer six 'W' questions: who, what, where, when, how, and why. Bill urged that songwriters do this in the first forty-five seconds. Once again, if the songwriter doesn't know the answer to these questions, his listeners will certainly be in the dark. It's a good practice to learn from classic songs: listen to Harry Chapin's story songs and see how many of these questions he answers in the first verse. Notice how he and other artists answer questions using colorful details.

STRUCTURE

ONE weakness many songwriters have is neglecting to structure their songs. According to Bill, many are frightened by the very concept of form in song: "Lots of songwriters hate hearing the word 'structure' - it sends shivers down their spine." They don't want to bother with it, preferring to "do their own thing" in an ad hoc way and not even think about principles. But as Bill pointed out, this is another example of ignoring the audience, your customers. "Art and songwriting have no rules BUT they have decisions and consequences," he admonished. "You're asking a lot from listeners - you're asking them to pay." The songwriter does neither himself nor his audience any favor by ignoring form. Bill, once again the psychologist, summarized a Harvard study that strongly supported this thesis - it found that the more structured and symmetric a song is, the more listeners perceive it as aesthetic.

Bill spent some time talking about song structure, breaking it down into three basic components - the verses, the chorus, and the bridge. The verses tell the song's story, leading to the main message. The chorus expresses the main theme and is repeated several times. The bridge, which is shorter than the verse, is a transition connecting two parts of a song. The verse-chorus-bridge song is a very common one but a song does not have to have all three of these parts; many songs lack a chorus and/or a bridge. Bill diagrammed several varied patterns:

ABABAB, ABABCAB, BACCB, AAA, AACA, AAB AB, and this gave us an idea of the many possibilities.

SOUND, STRESS, AND SONG

SONGWRITERS have to deal not only with the big picture of song's story and structure, but also with the finer points of the stress of words and syllables. This is where Bill brought in metrics, the pattern and alignment of syllables and stress in a lyric and their overall alignment with the rhythm of the song. The pattern derives from the syllable count in each line and the stress of the syllables within the lines. Bill talked about the different patterns songwriters use. An ABAB pattern, in a song, for example, means that each of the A lines has a similar but not necessarily equal number of syllables and a similar stress pattern of the syllables, and likewise, each of the B lines closely matches in syllable count and stress pattern. Once again, however, matching these lyrical patterns with the musical beat adds complications. That's why the syllable counts often differ slightly. Nonetheless, a consistent pattern of length and stress in the paired lines gives the song a more unified form, pleasing the ear and making the song easier to remember.

Accenting is an art and a skill. "It's not enough to have the right words and the right syllables, you must also have the right stress and emphasis." Bill noted that a lot of people have problems getting the accent in the right place. Accenting the wrong syllable can produce not only a different feeling but also a different meaning. He recommended that songwriters practice by taking random words like 'interchangeability' and analyzing how many syllables they have and which syllable or syllables are accented. Not many people can answer this type of question quickly. It takes practice to become skilled at it. For singers, a vocal coach can help make sure they are placing the accent on the right syllable and maintaining a natural language.

Bill emphasized the principle of contrastive stress in language. It says that any word that we accent automatically sets up a contrast with its alternatives. When we're talking, we naturally stress the word that we want to convey a choice

or distinction. But when you have to fit the words into the rhythm of a song, you may inadvertently shift the accent to a different word that happens to coincide with an accented rhythm in the music. Even though you have the same set of words that you wrote on paper, you have given a different word the accent, and given the song a different meaning to the listener. To keep the verbal and musical accents in synch, the lyricist may have to substitute another word or put in a pause before a word.

RHYMING

How about rhyming? It seems common in every song. Is there a reason to rhyme? Many people think that it's simplistic in poetry and songwriting. Not so, said Bill. "The most powerful technique is rhyme," he said, adding, "It's lazy NOT to rhyme." It's another aid to listeners. What's difficult, he said, is to rhyme without using clichés. It's also very hard to rhyme some common words like 'love' that are the theme of many songs.

Although rhyming is best, Bill advised that 'if you can't get a perfect rhyme, you should use assonance - near rhymes.' For instance, in a para-rhyme, you keep the consonants at beginning and end of words the same but change the vowel in the middle. The effect, Bill said, is to keep your listener awake and stimulated.

Does balancing all these elements seem difficult? It is. That's why it takes years to become a skilled songcrafter. Bill mentioned Malcolm Gladwell's recent work *Outliers*, which, drawing on psychological research, argued that it takes approximately 10,000 hours to master a craft. For songwriters, that means a lot of practice, a lot of songs, and a lot of mistakes.

What does Bill think of the current chart toppers? He doesn't find mainstream pop lyrics very interesting. "A lot of number one songs don't show a lot of craft," Bill said, a sentiment many Mensans concurred with. He thinks that the best craftsmanship comes from Broadway and - surprisingly - country lyricists. This in spite of his low opinion of Nashville: "Nashville has the highest concentration of musicians in the

U.S. They all have same mind. They are the most formulaic and rule-bound. They also have the broadest appeal - they've mastered what matters to the masses." Notwithstanding this mentality, he thinks the country music world, perhaps because of its constraints, always has a lot of well-written songs.

Bill answered a lot of questions from the audience in the course of his talk, but he devoted time at the end to taking some more questions. Asked what surprising things he has learned about songwriting from his work with the Connecticut Songwriters, Bill replied that the most encouraging lesson is that many older novices have a hidden gift for composing songs. 'We have a lot of 60 to 70 year-olds who have just discovered their talent,' he told us. Learning a new skill seems to invigorate these senior citizens. Undoubtedly, learning from Bill and his colleagues at C.S.A. has helped them blossom.

Art, science, psychology - Bill Pere brought it all together in his splendid presentation. It was great to hear a Renaissance man elucidate an art that is often 'explained' in mere platitudes or fuzzy feelings. Bill clearly described the framework, tools, and skills used in songwriting and the tricky art of putting them all together. Teaching it, as Bill Pere demonstrated, is also a high art.

You can check out these websites to learn more about the Connecticut Songwriters Association (CSA) and Bill's activities:

www.billpere.com,
www.ctsongs.com,
www.ctsongwriting.com,
www.songcrafterscoloringbook.com.

To contact the CSA, e-mail info@ctsongs.com. They have representatives in many different areas of the state (including Fairfield County) and will be happy to have someone answer your questions.

NEXT DINNER: Saturday, Jan. 15 we will be having the New Members Dinner. Local Mensan Jerry Brooker will be talking about his trip to Nepal. New members and returning members are all invited. Bring your friends.

NOTED & QUOTED

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep.

- Henry David Thoreau, (1817 - 1862)

For a man to achieve all that is demanded of him he must regard himself as greater than he is. - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, (1749 - 1832)

A man is like a fraction whose numerator is what he is and whose denominator is what he thinks of himself. The larger the denominator the smaller the fraction.

- Leo Tolstoy, (1828 - 1910)

We must love a being who is in us and is not ourselves. - Blaise Pascal, (1623 - 1662)

I'm willing to admit that I may not always be right, but I am never wrong.

- Samuel Goldwyn, (1882 - 1974)

Buildings should be good neighbours.

- Paul Thiry, (1904 - 1993), U.S. architect

To build is a sacred act, an action that transforms a condition of nature into a condition of culture. - Mario Botta, (1943 -), Swiss architect

Our epoch is determining day by day, its own style. Our eyes, unhappily, are unable yet to discern it.

- Le Corbusier, (1887 - 1965), Swiss-Franco architect.

Proud people breed sad sorrows for themselves.

- Emily Bronte, (1818 - 1848)

Rancor is an outpouring of a feeling of inferiority. - Ortega y Gasset, (1883 - 1955, Spanish philosopher and politician

My friends, there are no friends.

- Coco Chanel, (1883 - 1971), French fashion designer, perfumer

Death is the greatest evil, because it cuts off hope.

- William Hazlitt, (1778 - 1830), English critic, essayist

I drink the wine of aspiration and the drug of

illusion. Thus I am never dull.

- John Galsworthy, (1867 - 1933, British novelist

One never reaches home, but wherever friendly paths intersect the whole world looks like home for a time.

- Herman Hesse, (1877 - 1962), German novelist

Beauty is everlasting and dust is for a time.

- Marianne Moore, (1887 - 1972), U.S. poet

The face of Garbo is an Idea, that of Hepburn an Event.

- Roland Barthes, (1915 - 1980), French literary theorist, philosopher, critic

I don't play guitar. I play amplifier.

- Jimi Hendrix, (1942 - 1970)

To listen is an effort, and just to hear is no merit. A duck hears also. - Igor Stravinsky, (1882 - 1971)

Good music is wine turned to sound.

- Ella Wheeler Wilcox, (1850 - 1919), U.S. poet

Probability is a liberal art.

- Nassim Nicholas Taleb, (1960 -)

Probability does not exist.

- Bruno de Finetti, (1906 - 1985), Italian statistician, actuary

Perspective is worth 80 I.Q. points. - Alan Kay, (1940 -), U.S. computer scientist and entrepreneur

The world is our school. - John Amos Comenius, (1592 - 1670), Czech clergyman, educator, and writer

I learn by going where I have to go.

- Theodore Rothke, (1908 - 1963), U.S. poet

It is moral virtue which makes a pupil studious rather than merely curious

- Mark van Doren, (1894 - 1972), U.S. poet, literary critic

No one can become really educated without having pursued some study in which he took no interest - for it is part of education to learn to interest ourselves in subjects for which we have no aptitude.

- T.S. Eliot, (1888 - 1965)

Canada's climate is nine months winter and

three months late in the fall.

- *Evan Esar, (1899 - 1995), U.S. humorist*

As soon as my feet touched China, I became Chinese.

- *Amy Tan, (1952 -), Chinese-American novelist*

Few people know how to be old.

- *La Rochefoucauld, (1613 - 1680), French epigrammatist*

The play was a great success but the audience was a disaster.

- *Oscar Wilde, (1854 - 1900)*

One of the striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only nine lives.

- *Mark Twain, (1835 - 1910), Pudd'nhead Wilson*

The great achievements of the past were the adventures of the past.

- *Alfred North Whitehead, (1861 - 1947)*

History is a mighty drama, enacted upon the theatre of times, with suns for lamps and eternity for a background. - *Thomas Carlyle, (1795 - 1881)*

History does not usually make real sense until long afterward.

- *Bruce Catton, (1899 - 1978), U.S. journalist, historian*

History, history! We fools, what do we know or care. - *William Carlos Williams, (1883 - 1963), U.S. poet, pediatrician*

A civilization is born stoic and dies epicurean.

- *Will Durant, (1885 - 1981)*

A tablecloth restaurant is still one of the great

rewards of civilization.

- *Harry Golden, (1902 - 1981), U.S. essayist*

The difference between barbarian and civilized expectations is the difference between the will to dominate and the will toward regeneration.

To dominate you must throw the rascals out; to regenerate, you have to take them with you.

- *Cynthia Ozick, (1931 -), Art and Ardor, 1983*

We have, as human beings, a storytelling problem. We're a bit too quick to come up with explanations for things we don't really have an explanation for.

- *Malcolm Gladwell, (1963 -)*

The burden of the player isn't to achieve greatness, but to give the feeling of it to everyone he encounters. It was wrong of me even to try to separate life and the game.

- *Dirk Hayhurst, (1981 -), The Bullpen Gospels: Major League Dreams of a Minor League Veteran, 2010*

Is the education of the young the whole of life? I hate the young - I'm worn out with them. They absorb you and suck you dry and are vampires and selfish brutes at best. Give me some good old rum-soaked clubmen - who can't be improved and make no moral claims - and let me play checkers with them and look out of the club window and think about what I'll have for dinner. - *John Jay Chapman, (1862-1933), U.S. writer and essayist*

WORD CHECK

Define these words. Check your answers at right.

1. aureole -

2. camber -

3. demoded -

4. distend -

5. fluvial -

6. labile (LAY-bil) -

7. lachrymose -

8. purblind -

9. stratagem -

10. sylvan -

10. sylvan - 1. pertaining to the woods.
2. wooded, woody.

9. stratagem - a means of deception; a trick.

8. purblind - partly blind; obtuse, dull.

7. lachrymose - tending to shed or induce tears.

6. labile - apt to err; unstable.

5. fluvial - pertaining to rivers.

4. distend - to expand by stretching or swelling.

3. demoded - out of fashion.

2. camber - a slight curve or arch.

1. aureole - a halo or nimbus.

ANSWERS:



MENSA MIND GAMES 2010 RESULTS

More than 200 Mensans gathered in San Diego this weekend for Mind Games 2010. During the three-day event, members played and rated 49 board and card games. The top five games have earned Mensa Select distinction and may use the Mensa Select seal on their games. This year's winners are:

Anomia (Anomia Press, www.anomiapress.com)

Dizios (MindWare, www.mindware.com)

Forbidden Island (Gamewright, www.gamewright.com)

Word on the Street (Out of the Box Publishing, www.otb-games.com)

Yikerz! (Wiggles 3D Incorporated, www.yikerzgame.com)

Mind Games 2011 will be held April 15-17 in Albany, NY. Register for just \$55 through April 30, 2010 at www.mindgames.us.mensa.org

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Chronicle Postage/Supplies:	\$322.96
Speakers Dinners:	\$142.55
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"Bridgeport - Tales from the Park City" by Eric Lehman, is available at www.historypress.net or www.amazon.com. Paperback.

Holistic Kidney

Check out the Holistic Kidney website online. <http://www.holistic-kidney.com/articles.html> My first article is an interview with the author of How I Avoided Dialysis and You Can Too! Dr. Jenna Henderson Holistic Kidney A Safe, Natural Approach for all stages of Kidney Disease

BUSINESS OFFICE AMERICAN MENSA, LTD.
1229 Corporate Drive West
Arlington, TX 76006-6103

Phone: 817-607-0060
Fax: 817-649-5232
E-mail: AmericanMensa@mensa.org
Website: www.us.mensa.org

LIST OF SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA OFFICERS President

Debra Jennings			locsec@rocketmail.com
Vice-President	Jim Mizera	203-522-1959	Jmizera@hotmail.com PMB #181, 7365 Main St. Stratford, CT 06614-1300
Treasurer	Elizabeth Marks Cortright	203-655-9791	reemmm@optonline.net 11 Scout Trail Darien, CT 06820-4323
Secretary	vacant		
Editor	Jim Mizera	203-522-1959	Jmizera@hotmail.com PMB #181, 7365 Main St. Stratford, CT 06614-1300
Publisher	Amy Harold	203-261-6517	amyharold@earthlink.net 110 Bart Road Monroe, CT 06468-1117
Web Master	Thomas O'Neill	203-336-5254	doctec2@gmail.com 68 Pierce Ave. Bridgeport, CT 06604-1607
Ombudsman	Gary Oberst	203-853-1810	gary@oberstlaw.com 111 East Ave. Norwalk, CT 06851-5014
Membership Officer	Jim Mizera	203-522-1959	Jmizera@hotmail.com
Reg Vice Chairman	Lori J. Norris	401-781-3247	lorijnorris@hotmail.com http://region1.us.mensa.org