

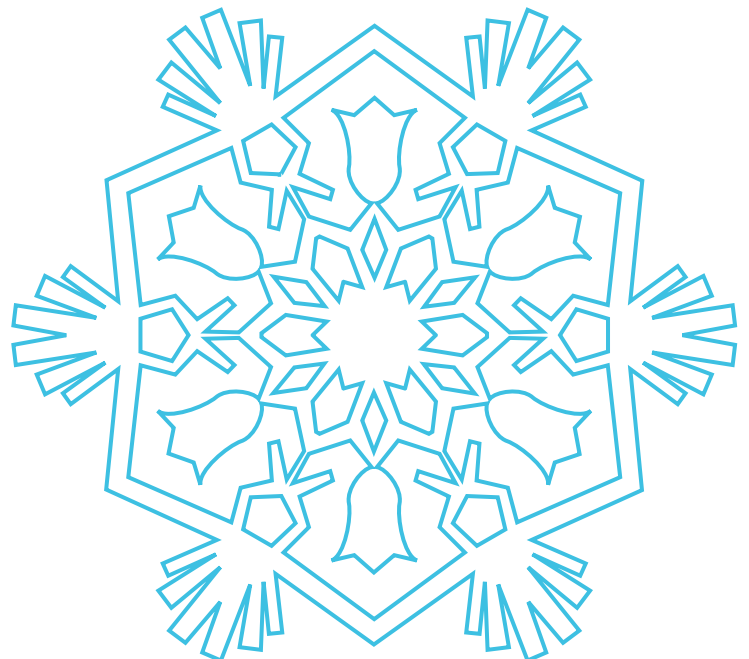
SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA CHRONICLE

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL forms will be sent out in early January 2003. However you may renew online at www.us.mensa.org or by calling (817) 607-0060, ext. 199 using your MasterCard or Visa.

If you or someone you know would like to be a speaker at our monthly dinner, please contact Nancy O'Neil at NancyOneil@aol.com. The dinner is held the third Saturday of the month at the Three Door Restaurant in Bridgeport.

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SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR JANUARY

Wednesday, January 8, 7:00

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.

This regular dinner is now being held the 2nd Wednesday of each month 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.

Wednesday, January 8, Doors open at 7:30

Poetry Reading at Bethel Arts Junction, Bethel Railroad Depot.

BOOK PARTY - Southern CT Mensa member Jerry Brooker will be reading poetry from his new book, "A Quiet Conversation" from approximately 8:30 to 9:00. Open mike preceding, poetry workshop afterwards. Suggested donation, \$1.

Saturday, January 18, 7:00

Monthly dinner, Three Door Restaurant

1775 Madison Ave., BRIDGEPORT.

New Members Dinner. This dinner will be FREE to all Mensans and a guest. Dining room capacity is 50 - reservations are strongly recommended.

Australian Mensan Leigh St. John, a noted lecturer, writer, trainer, and founder of About Achievement Pty Ltd., will be our speaker. If you are a new member or just haven't had the chance to attend recently, come to our January dinner and meet some of the other new and returning members. Make it your New Year's Resolution to attend this dinner.

Socializing starts at 7:00, followed by dinner at approximately 8:00. Please contact Nancy O'Neil at nancyoneil@aol.com or 203-791-1668 for information and reservations. Dinner includes everything but the cash bar. Dress is casual and guests are welcome.

Saturday, January 25, 8:15

THEATRE EVENT: Agatha Christie's Ten Little Indians at the Clockwork Repertory Theatre, 133 Main St., OAKVILLE, CT 06779. Tickets are \$14.

For info or reservations, please call Jim Mizera at (203) 522-1959 or e-mail Jmizera@hotmail.com. Try to call by Mon., 1/19 to assure seats.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY

Wednesday, February 12, 7:00

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.

See above listing for details.

Saturday, February 15, 7:00

Monthly Dinner, Three Door Restaurant

1775 Madison Ave., BRIDGEPORT.

Local Mensan Paul Levine will speak on "Crisis Management for Businesses"

CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS MENSA CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS

This is not a complete listing. WE - Weekly Event, ME - Monthly Event, YE - Yearly Event

Side note - There is a Floating Jazz SIG that Janine Bujalski is developing. If you'd like to be on her email list, please let her know at JanineB_CPA@compuserve.com (that's Underscore_CPA!) - Beth Collins, CT & W. Mass Calendar Editor

JANUARY

1 Wednesday

Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous 2003 to you all!

Open House at Art Swanson's place, 1 Abbott Road, Unit 185, Ellington, Ct. Join us to bring in the New Year. Bring a dish to share and BYOB. But more important, bring yourself. Soda and munchies will be supplied. RSVP: Tel: 860-872-9308 or e-mail: Aswanson34@AOL.COM.

Admitted in CT, NY & OR

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2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Thursday 7:00 PM

Scrabble (WE) at Emmanuel Synagogue

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

3, Friday 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Happy Hour (ME, first Friday) at the Ramada Inn, Meriden

Ann Polanski, (203) 269-4565. This monthly reunion usually draws 10-20 people, Nov. 2 we had 30! We warmly welcome newcomers, and it's less than a mile from the I-91 and I-691 interchange.

DIRECTIONS: From I-91 north or south, or Route 15 north or south, take East Main St. (Meriden) exit, head east (away from Meriden Center). After the I-91 interchanges, take a right at the next light. There is a small Ramada sign at the corner. After you pass the Meriden Cinema Complex and the road curves to the left, take a right into the Ramada parking lot. Inside Silver City Grill, ask the host/hostess for the Mensa table - they know us well!

15, Saturday 7:30

Happy Heart's Party

at Beth & Charlie's. This is our 8th annual celebration of our healthy hearts. Please join us, bring a dish, and chat, make a jigsaw puzzle, or pump the player piano. Details in the Feb. calendar.

17 Friday 7:30 - 10:00 PM

Diner Dinner

(ME) Third Friday of the month, at Olympia Diner, Rte 5, Newington, just north of the Berlin town line and North East Utilities. Meet at 6 PM or thereabouts. Diner Dinner ranges from toasted cheese sandwich to steak and fish dinners. Basic bar menu available, no happy hour prices, but the food is good and very reasonable. Please contact Nicole Michaud at (860) 434-7329 or email nirimi@snet.net, subject "diner dinner."

24 Friday 5:00 PM

Fourth Friday Happy Hour, (ME, fourth Friday)

Colonial Tymes, 2389 Dixwell Ave Hamden. Located about 1/2 mile north of Exit 60, Wilbur

Cross Parkway. We have been able to sit at a nice big table and enjoy the good free food for a few months now. Come on down and join us. We also seem to be going out to dinner after, so if you plan to come and want dinner, too, let us know so we can reserve. Gail Trowbridge (203) 877-4472 or Gail.Trowbridge@att.com. I send out an e-mail reminder every month. Let me know if you'd like to be on the list.

29 Wednesday Noon

Waterbury Last Wednesday of the Month Lunch (ME) at Maggie McFly's, Rt. 63, Middlebury, Dick Fogg, (860) 274-2370.

MENSA REGIONAL GATHERINGS

February 14-16

Region 1 RG, New Hampshire RG Granite Gathering Aught Three

Danvers, Mass. Sheraton Ferncroft Resort, 50 Ferncroft Rd., Danvers, MA 01923; 800/325-3535 or 978/777-2500. SR/DR \$85; TR \$97; QR \$112 + tax. Room rates guaranteed to 11/6 5:00 PM. Checks payable to Boston Mensa. S CD 5 & 21 H RP to 11/8 DT CP H/AS \$33 one way. Registrar Keep your brain warm this winter! Games galore, private pool party, movies, kids' room, book sale, new member welcome, generous hospitality, mind-blowing beer selection, 2-track speaker program (climate symphony, war gaffes, tarot, astronomy, etc.)!

Reg. \$45 to 11/15; \$50 to 12/31; \$55 to 2/13; \$60 walk-in. MP (2) \$38. Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, 4 Executive Park Dr., Merrimack, NH 03054; 603/424-8000.

SR/DR/TR/QR \$75 + tax. Room rates guaranteed to 1/21. Checks payable to NH Mensa RG. S CD 7,17 H RP to 1/31 DT SA (local) CP CC (V MC). Contact: Deb Stone, POB 7998, Nashua, NH 03060-7998

April 25 - 27, 2003

GREATER NEW YORK MENSA Presents "A NEW YORK STATE OF MIND."

FOOD, GAMES, SPEAKERS, SOCIALIZING! FREE COCKTAIL HOUR, AND PROFESSIONAL COMEDY SHOW ON FRIDAY NIGHT! For superb N.Y. hotel rates, call the Staten Island Hotel by 3/31/03 at (718) 698-5000 and mention Mensa. \$99 + tax single/double Friday, Saturday. Hotel is convenient to downtown N.Y.C., L.I., N.J.

Turnpike, and Newark Airport. Directions will be sent with registration confirmation.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Name on Badge _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____

Per Person Registration Rates:

Until 11/30/02: \$40 _____

Until 1/31/03: \$50 _____

Until 3/31/03: \$55 _____

After 3/31/03: \$60 _____

Sumptuous Saturday Buffet _____

Dinner \$36 _____

Splendid Sunday Brunch \$17 _____

TOTAL _____

I want to participate in:

- _____ Helping in Hospitality
- _____ Helping at Registration
- _____ Helping to Introduce Speakers
- _____ Presenting a Program

Please return this form and your check or money order - payable to GNYM RG 2003 to: Karen Coopersmith-Tobin, Registrar 20 Wisteria Court Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852

QUESTIONS? Call Karen Coopersmith-Tobin at (732) 438-0067 or Brenda Giammanco at (718) 980-1686 IlanasMom@aol.com
paleneka@juno.com

July 2 - 6, 2003

2003 ANNUAL GATHERING . MINNESOTA MENSA and MENSA CANADA present LIGHT UP THE NORTH. St. Paul, Minnesota. Register online at www.ag2003.com.

The AG will have a full slate of speakers and activities to keep you occupied for the entire five days, along with nonpareil hospitality.

REGISTRATION: \$70.00 until 3/31/03. 1/2 price for ages 6-12, free for 5 and under. HOTEL:

Radisson Hotel Riverfront, located on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi in downtown St. Paul. 1-800-333-3333 \$84.00/night (+tax), S/D/T/Q

Meal Package: \$59.00 includes Friday Awards Luncheon, Saturday Night Banquet, Sunday

Brunch. Special Added Attraction: Friday July 4th Riverboat Dinner Cruise on the Mississippi

(\$35.00). REGISTRAR: Jane Gmur E-mail:

registrar@ag2003.com Make checks payable to:

2003 Mensa Annual Gathering Mail to:

P.O. Box 2087, Minneapolis, MN 554002-0087

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

First, on behalf of the Officers of Southern Connecticut Mensa, best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year.

I'd like to invite you all, especially those who haven't been to a meeting in a while, to attend our January Monthly Dinner. Our guest speaker will be Leigh St. John, from Australia. Leigh is a very accomplished mentor (for lack of a more inclusive word). More information about Leigh can be found on her professional profile online at <http://www.aboutachievement.info/Profile.html>.

In addition to what will be an outstanding presentation, the Chapter will also pick up the cost of dinner on that night. Members may bring one guest, too. Be sure to contact Nancy O'Neil if you're planning to attend, as space will be limited to the first 50 attendees. Hope to see you there.

Rick D'Amico
Southern CT Mensa President

NEW MEMBERS THIS MONTH: The following are members new to Southern Connecticut Mensa: Meghan Kearney, Douglas, A Bushong, Domenica Piantedosi, Brian Evans.

NOTED AND QUOTED

If we must escape from reality, it should be to a deeper, or greater reality.

- *philosopher, critic, and editor Mortimer Adler (1902 - 2001), How to Read a Book*

If we attach more significance to feeling than to thinking, we shall soon, by a simple extension, attach more to wanting than to deserving.

- *Richard Weaver (1910 - 1963), Ideas Have Consequences, 1948*

A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right ...

Time makes more converts than reason.

- *Thomas Paine (1737 - 1809),*

Life might be an eternity between two oblivions, a vast anacoluthon, a sentence without a meaning.

- *Irwin Edman (1896 ^ 1954), Arts and the Man, 1928*

Life is one long struggle in the dark.

- *Lucretius (96 ^ 55 B.C.), Roman poet, philosopher*

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PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

Regional Vice-Chairman Betsy Burke

Are you planning on making or keeping any New Year's resolutions this year? I've been thinking of this (actually, I often make New Year's resolutions - it's the keeping of them that causes problems).

How about resolving to save money? You can achieve this objective in many ways. If there are 2 or more members of your household who belong to Mensa, remember that you can claim yourself as a Mensa Household and have your dues adjusted accordingly.

You can also save some money by registering for Regional Gatherings and the Annual Gathering early. Most groups offer an incentive to register early. If you're a walk-in, you pay full price.

If you're feeling particularly frugal and if you have some extra cash on hand, then you can always take advantage of a lifetime membership in Mensa. You'll also no longer have to respond to renewal notices. You do respond to the first reminder, don't you?

How about volunteering your time to help your group in some way? Tom Rankin has already taken up the challenge of becoming Region 1 Webmaster. Tom is a member of Mid-Hudson and he contacted Gerry Riley for information. Thanks Tom and thanks to all the other's who volunteered. William Houze of Maine and Jim Fahy of New Hampshire have both come forth with some ideas for Maine and New Hampshire. Please, local officers, don't stop volunteering your time. We couldn't exist without you. If your local group has a fold, staple, and mutilate event, that's a relatively easy way to help your group.

Why not resolve to win something that brings you honors? Casimer Decusatis became the winner of this year's Copper-Black Merf award. He is only the third person so honored. Last year's winner was John Pellegrino, also from Region 1.

Become a winner in the top ten list of offers to join Mensa. Boston won for our Region with 22 offers extended while both Connecticut &

Western Massachusetts and Greater New York Mensa

had 20. Minnesota was first with 53. Thanks to all the proctors who help make this possible.

Why not resolve to do some socializing with Mensans? You can do this by attending an RG or even a local event. New Hampshire has their RG in February and Greater New York Mensa's is in April. If you go to GNYM's RG, you can even tell your friends that you're going away to an island for the weekend. Of course, it's up to you whether you tell them you mean Staten Island.

Resolve to develop more healthy eating habits. Try and abstain from all the chocolates at RGs and instead partake of the veggie platters. Resolve to become more physically active. Get up and go to some events and remember to use the stairs.

Resolve to be thankful for all that we have. My thanks to everyone who contacts me with their thoughts and problems. I'm thankful that I have this Mensa family. Please resolve to stay warm, healthy, and active in whatever way you can.

THE DECEMBER DINNER**CUSTOMIZED COMPOUNDS AND NATURAL HORMONE REPLACEMENT**

What are customized compound solutions? What is natural hormone replacement therapy? These were some of the basic questions pharmacist and compounding specialist Michael Roberge answered during his talk at the December Mensa dinner. But Michael did not stop with these questions - he couldn't. Right from the outset, the audience had many more questions for Mr. Roberge, and the questions continued even long after he had finished his presentation. Our speaker was equal to the challenge, however, and enlightened the audience about choices many did not know existed.

People who go to major pharmacies are probably unfamiliar with customized medications. But as Michael Roberge explained, there are patients who have unique needs that

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CUSTOMIZED COMPOUNDS CONT.

can only be met by customized compounds. The great advantage of compounding is that some medications may not be available in the right dosage or form for a patient. Some drugs may not be on the market at all because they do not have a big enough market. Only a compounding specialist like Michael can solve these problems. Using specialized chemicals and equipment, he can prepare medications in non-standard dosages, in more palatable flavors, or without potentially irritating ingredients like sugar or lactose. He can also provide liquid and gel forms of medicine that are better-absorbed or safer than injections or patches. Patients in pain or those who cannot swallow especially need these or other alternative forms.

Michael also talked extensively about natural hormone replacement. He pointed out the word natural is confusing to many people. After all, some hormones may be natural to animals, such as horses, but unnatural to humans. A more precise term is "bio-identical" hormones, which are hormones that have the same chemical structure as hormones made in the human body. These are truly natural because they are identical to human hormones. Michael stressed that bio-identical hormones have fewer side effects than synthetic hormones. Synthesized hormones usually stay in the body longer, making the risks greater. Only hormones that have the same molecular structure will act in the same exact way as natural hormones. But bio-identical hormones cannot be patented, and so are not feasible to produce or test by major pharmaceutical companies. This gap is filled by pharmacists like Michael and the some 250 other compounding pharmacists in the country.

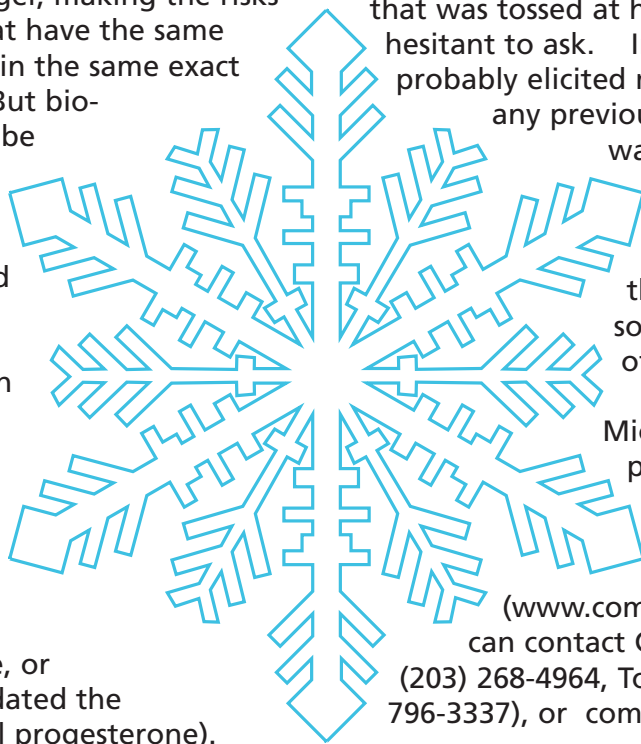
A special area of concern for Michael is the use of estrogen and progesterone replacements for women going through perimenopause, menopause, or postmenopause. He elucidated the differences between natural progesterone)

Human estrogen is a balance of three estrogens - Estriol (roughly 80%), Estrone (approximately 10%), and Estradiol (10-20%). But Premarin is composed of mostly Estrone, Equilin - an estrogen derived from horses, Estrodial and other estrogens. Premarin and Provera are commonly combined in a single pill. But this approach does not work for many women because the balance and dosages do not suit their natural hormone levels. Individualized treatment is needed because of individual differences. Menopause can start anywhere from 28 years of age to 55, and some women may produce 70% of their estrogen as Estriol, while others produce up to 85%. Long-term comprehensive studies also seem to show that Premarin and Provera have harmful side effects such as increased risks for breast cancer and cardiac disease. Bio-identical estrogen and progesterone seem to be safer and more effective.

Mr. Roberge answered questions on dozens of other pharmaceutical topics - DHEA, human growth hormone, steroids to improve athletic performance, nicotine replacements, plant estrogens (phytoestrogens), testosterone, customized dosages to treat chronic pain, special compounds for animals, and even duct tape as a cure for warts. He had clear and knowledgeable explanations for every question that was tossed at him, and Mensans were not hesitant to ask. In fact, Michael's talk probably elicited more questions than that of any previous speaker. The presentation was an impressive introduction to customized compounding and natural hormone replacement, and the audience learned something new every minute of it.

Michael Roberge, RPh, is proprietor of Compounded Solutions in Pharmacy, LLC, 179 Main St., Monroe, CT, 06468

(www.compoundedsolutions.com). You can contact Compounded Solutions at (203) 268-4964, Toll Free 877-Rx NEEDS (or 877-796-3337), or compounds1@aol.com.



ARE WE ALL SEPARATED BY SIX DEGREES?

In 1990 a hit Broadway play brought a new phrase into the popular lexicon. John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation* told the story of a young man who talked his way into the homes of famous New Yorkers by pretending to be the son of Sidney Poitier. What caught the public imagination was not the play itself so much as the concept behind the play - the idea that just a few friends or acquaintances link us all.

The play got its title from an experiment run in 1967 by Stanley Milgram, the psychologist famous for his experiments on obedience to authority. Dr. Milgram's goal was to see how far social connections extend. He asked subjects in Kansas and Nebraska to try to reach selected people in Boston by sending letters to a friend or acquaintance who they thought might know the target individuals. Each recipient of a letter was instructed to do the same thing.

In an article in *Psychology Today* in 1967 and a paper published in *Sociometry* in 1969, Milgram reported the results of his study. He found that the letters passed through an average of only five people before reaching their intended recipient. We live in a "small world", Milgram concluded, one in which everyone is connected to everyone else by a chain of about five intermediary links, the final destination being the sixth degree of separation.

Simple mathematics lent some credence to the "small world" idea. Using a conservative estimate, a person knows about 100 people on a first-name basis. If each person that you know in turn knows 100 other people, you could be connected to 100 times 100, or 10,000 people. Carry this reasoning two-steps further and you

are connected to 100 million people. A fifth link (sixth degree) would connect you with a population of 100 billion - the world and then some.

The preceding calculation, however, assumes that there is no overlap between the 100 people one person knows and the 100 people the next person in the chain knows. This is highly unlikely. People do not choose their friends randomly. The person you contact is likely to know many of the same people you do. There will be certainly be overlap in your combined lists; the only question is how much redundancy there will be. If you live in an isolated village, everyone there would know only each other. It would be a closed community with an overlap or redundancy rate among contacts of 100%. There would have to be some outside contact to extend the network. Perhaps in more urbanized areas, the overlap might be only 50%. Then if one person knows 100 people and his contact has 50 unique acquaintances on his list, 5000 people are indirectly connected. After six degrees, $100 \times 50 \times 50 \times 50 \times 50 \times 50 = 31.25$ billion people connections, still more than the population of the world.

The two extremes of a closed social circle and a random social circle produce enormous differences in the number of ultimate connections a person has. The question is how many random connections it would take to open up a closed circle significantly? Surprisingly few according to research done in 1998 by mathematician Dr. Steven Strogatz of Cornell and social scientist Dr. Duncan Watts of Columbia University. Watts and Strogatz found that an increase of only 1% in the randomness of connections in a network decreased the number of links necessary to connect to any other node ten-fold! In other words, a few shortcuts can turn a big world into a small world

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SIX DEGREES CONT.

where every node can quickly communicate with any other node. It's not necessary for every node to expand its direct connections. All that's required is for some nodes to reach out to nodes outside their cluster. It takes only a few such shortcuts; then diminishing returns set in. But these key links dramatically expand the number of connections without changing the structure of the network much.

Strogatz and Watts' mathematical research strengthened the idea that there are only six degrees of separation between not only everyone in the United States, but everyone in the world. For their model networks could obviously be social networks. You might not know anyone in China but if you know a Chinese immigrant who has relatives there, you quickly become connected to a much larger social circle. The immigrant from China is a "shortcut" to another region of the social network. The world, if not quite a global village, becomes smaller.

The small world idea is powerful, but has it actually been tested? Is a random person actually separated by an average of only six degrees from any other person on the globe? Many people who accept the idea believe that Stanley Milgram demonstrated it convincingly. But it turns out there is much reason to doubt Milgram's conclusions. Judith S. Kleinfeld, a social psychologist at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, reviewed Dr. Milgram's experiments in the Yale archives, along with similar experiments. She found several problems. One is that other researchers did not replicate Milgram's study. Some attempted to but they did not cast their nets very wide, so their experiments didn't rigorously test the idea. Secondly, the complete record of Dr. Milgram's papers shows the results of his experiments actually fall short of the claims. Milgram did not report the outcome of a preliminary study he did. In that experiment, 60 people were recruited and fifty chains were started. However, only three (5%) reached their intended recipient and they went through an average of eight people. What about the experiment that Milgram actually reported? Here, of the 217 letter chains that started, only 64 (29%) were completed. We cannot assume that the letters that didn't reach their

destination were discarded as junk mail because they were designed to look quite important - royal blue cardboard passports with the name and logo of "Harvard University" in gold. If there was any bias in the experiment, it was probably one that encouraged people to make extra efforts to pass along the documents.

There is another important reason to doubt the experiment - it did not use a random sample. The recruitment ads and mailing lists Milgram used to obtain participants for the study almost guaranteed that more sociable, well-traveled, affluent people would volunteer. A subsequent unpublished study that Milgram did showed very low completion rates when low-income or black people tried to reach middle-class and high-income people. Middle- and upper-middle class people did better at reaching low-income people and others. An independent study (Lin, Dayton, and Greenwald, 1978) showed similar results. Overall completion rates were 30% - similar to Milgram's published study. Thus when we look closely at the actual experiments, we find that it may not be a small world after all.

It is clear that the idea of six degrees of separation between people has been too hastily accepted. Social scientists paid too much attention to the anecdotes in Milgram's paper and not enough to the details. The general public swallowed the story because they found the idea pleasing and because of selective memories. Everyone has a story of a stranger they met who turns out to have a mutual friend or acquaintance. People remember these incidents and invariably repeat (or even sing) the "It's a small world" cliché when it happens. However, they don't remember or tell others about the situations where they questioned strangers and found no acquaintances - these stories do not make for entertaining dinner-table conversation. Hence, there really is little effort to examine the truth or probability of the cliché.

There is an experiment underway to better test the six degrees of separation hypothesis. Dr. Watts of Columbia has been using his Web site, www.smallworld.sociology.columbia.edu, to run a modern Web version of Milgram's experiment. He is tracing not only the steps but also the methods each participant uses to reach a small

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SIX DEGREES CONT.

number of target persons in diverse countries. Although a few widely scattered people have found each other in four links, most chains have gone uncompleted so far. Regardless of whether the experiment succeeds, however, many see fundamental problems with it. Dr. Kleinfeld, for one, finds many of the same problems that flawed Milgram's experiments in Watts' high-tech version. People who use the Internet are not random global citizens, she points out, since the vast majority of the world's people do not own computers. Thus, the experiment cannot test much less demonstrate that we live in a small world.

So the small-world hypothesis remains speculation. Is there anything we can learn from the research? Yes, although the main idea remains inconclusive, there are several practical lessons. First, it should be clear from Strogatz and Watts' mathematical work that not all links are equally valuable. Just a few links that cut across the network served as shortcuts. The same holds for personal networks. In Milgram's experiments, half of the documents that reached the destination were delivered by just three people. Of the twenty-four packets that reached one of the targets at home, sixteen were delivered by the same person, a clothing merchant. This type of person is a key link, like a hub in an airline system. Key people are not usually famous people, they are people who, like the clothing merchant, cut across social circles or cliques. It is these people who connect us to everyone else.

Another lesson comes out in the research of

sociologist Mark Granovetter, who interviewed several hundred workers for his book "Getting a Job" (Cambridge, Mass; Harvard University Press, 1974). Granovetter found that most people found their jobs through personal connections, something that has become well known. What is more surprising is that over 80% of these connections were not close connections. They were far more likely to be acquaintances than friends. Your friends may have mostly the same contacts as you do but your casual acquaintances will probably know of people and opportunities that you don't. Most of the people in Milgram's experiment probably were not close friends with the clothing merchant. He was just a casual acquaintance who linked different groups because he knew a wide circle of people. So it's not whom you know on a first-name basis that counts, but how many people you know casually, particularly key people who serve as hubs to unknown opportunities. This is the type of networking that improves the odds. The same logic would work for the spread of ideas. It may not be the people inside a profession or field who popularize an idea, but key people on the periphery or outside.

Many questions arise from the studies by Milgram, Strogatz, and Watts. If people are connected by six degrees of separation, how can they identify those paths that connect them? Even if we are connected in theory, will we remain distant? If we are not just six degrees from everyone in the world, might technological progress and trade link us in the next generation? Is it even important for us to be linked to everyone else? All of these questions require another degree of investigation.

A HOLIDAY SPECIAL - GOOD WINE CHEAP (AND GOOD FOOD TO GO WITH IT)

By John Grover

This month we will consider a wine from Italy and a dish that should go very nicely with it. While an American's first thought of European wines generally leads to France, Italy is actually a substantially larger producer. There are literally thousands of wine producers and numerous very good native grape varieties spread through every corner of the country.

Campofiorin 1999, is a Russo del Verona (red wine of Verona) by Masi, imported by Remy Amerique, Inc. The wine is a blend of several native grape varieties, primarily Corvina. It has a rich, bold taste with a round and velvet feel in the mouth. While a good match for any Italian dish involving red sauce, it also pairs well with the salmon dish below. You should be able to find this wine for \$8 to \$10 a bottle.

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GOOD WINE CONT.**Salmon with Vodka Cream Sauce**

Ingredients: 1 can low-sodium chicken broth; ≤ lb. salmon fillet; 2 tbsp. Olive oil; 7 or 8 plum tomatoes (or canned); 3/4 cup chopped fresh basil (or 1/4 cup dried); 1 large clove garlic, minced; 4 tbsp. light cream cheese; 2 oz. vodka; 2 1/2 cups cooked farfalle (butterfly) pasta (about 5 oz. uncooked); grated Parmesan cheese; salt and pepper to taste

In a large nonstick pan heat the chicken broth until it approaches boiling. Add the salmon fillet, cover the pan and poach for 10 to 15 minutes, or until firm. Remove the salmon to a plate and flake it. Reserve the chicken broth.

Heat the olive oil in the same skillet and sauté the tomatoes, basil and garlic. When they are cooked through, return about 1/2 to 3/4 of the

broth to the pan then add cream cheese, stirring to blend. Season with salt and fresh ground pepper; then add vodka.

Place the salmon back in the pan and combine it with the sauce. If sauce is too thin, add more cream cheese. If too thick, add more broth. Serve over pasta and garnish with Parmesan. If you cannot find the above wine, a good Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Noir should also go well.

Remember Grover's first rule of acquisition is to buy wine by the case. I hope that you will contact me with your comments and favorite wines at jgrover@berk.com. I will be happy to share them with the broader Mensa group.

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

POETRY CORNER**WINTER SONG**

by: Katherine Mansfield

Rain and wind, and wind and rain.
Will the Summer come again?
Rain on houses, on the street,
Wetting all the people's feet,
Though they run with might and main.
Rain and wind, and wind and rain.

Snow and sleet, and sleet and snow.
Will the Winter never go?
What do beggar children do
With no fire to cuddle to,
P'raps with nowhere warm to go?
Snow and sleet, and sleet and snow.

Hail and ice, and ice and hail,
Water frozen in the pail.
See the robins, brown and red,
They are waiting to be fed.
Poor dears, battling in the gale!
Hail and ice, and ice and hail.

WINTER: A DIRGE

by: Robert Burns, 1781

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'erblast,"
The joyless winter day
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here firm I rest; they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want-O do Thou grant
This one request of mine!-
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. List reasons why a trial by judge might be better than trial by jury and vice-versa.
2. What risks are you most prone to misjudging?
3. Without looking at your odometer, estimate how many miles you drove last year. Check your answer as best as you can and see how close you were.
4. Describe the best metaphors you heard or read during the last year.
5. If a one-foot ruler is broken into 3 random lengths, what are the chances that the 3 pieces can be placed end-to-end to form a triangle?

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

4. If a club has four officers, how many committees can they form from that group to work on a project?

A. 15. You can calculate the answer by taking the number of combinations of 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-member committees and adding them up. The formula for finding the number of such combinations:

$$C(\text{Total}, \# \text{ selected}) = \frac{\text{total}!}{(\# \text{ selected})!(\text{total} - \# \text{ selected})!}$$

where !, the factorial, indicates the number should be multiplied by all the integers before it down to 1 - i.e., $n \times (n-1) \times (n-2) \dots 1$. For this problem, $C(4,1) = \frac{4!}{(1)!(4-1)!} = 4$, $C(4,2) = \frac{4!}{(2)!(4-2)!} = 6$, $C(4,3) = 4$, and $C(4,4) = 1$. The total therefore is $4 + 6 + 4 + 1 = 15$. A simpler formula for finding the same result is

Total Combinations = $2^k - 1$, where k is the number of total elements (officers in this case). In our example, $2^4 - 1 = 16 - 1 = 15$ different committees.

5. If a rubber ball is dropped from a height of 5 feet and it bounces back to 90% of its previous height on each bounce, how many total feet will it drop on all of its falls before it stops bouncing?

A. Each fall is only 9/10th of the previous one. Hence there will be a series of drops of

approximately 5, 4.5, 4.05, 3.64, 3.28, 2.95, ... feet - a steadily decreasing geometric series. You could add up all these terms until they shrink to an insignificant level, but there is a formula for such a diminishing series: $S = \frac{\text{initial}}{1 - \text{ratio}}$ where the ratio is .9. For this problem, the calculation is $S = \frac{5}{1 - .9} = \frac{5}{.1} = 50$ feet.

NOTED AND QUOTED CONT.

Linus: Maybe we should think only about today.
 Charlie Brown: No, that's giving up. I'm still hoping yesterday will get better.
 - Charles Schulz (1922 - 2000), *Peanuts*

Long-range goals keep you from being frustrated by short-term failures. - Anonymous

Young men are apt to think themselves wise enough, as drunken men are apt to think themselves sober enough.
 - Lord Chesterfield (1694 - 1773), 4th Earl of Chesterfield

The pen is mightier than the sword, and considerably easier to write with.
 - Marty Feldman (1933 - 1982), British comedian

Almost everything in life is easier to get into than out of. - Agnes' Law

We learn the rope of life by untying its knots.
 - Jean Toomer (1894 - 1967), U.S. author

In order to keep an open mind, I am trying to avoid learning anything.
 - Ashleigh Brilliant, UC Berkeley 'street' philosopher

In the land of hope, there is never any winter.
 - Russian Proverb

Jealousy is the only vice that gives no pleasure.
 - Anonymous

Procrastination is the grave in which we bury our dreams. - Amy Robertson

The truth does not care who tells it.
 - Kathryn Smith

If every Athenian had been a Socrates, the Athenian Assembly would still have been a mob.
 - John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), English economist and philosopher

NOTED AND QUOTED

My sources are unreliable, but their information is fascinating.

- *Ashleigh Brilliant - UC Berkeley 'street' philosopher*

The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously.

- *Hubert Humphrey, (1911-1978)*

If stupidity got us into this mess, why can't it get us out? - *Will Rogers, (1879 - 1935)*

Life is a horizontal fall.

- *Jean Cocteau, French dramatist and director (1889-1963)*

Living involves tearing up one rough draft after another. - *Unknown*

Monotony is the awful reward of the careful.

- *A.G. Buckham*

A fine artist is one who makes familiar things new and new things familiar.

- *Louis Nizer, U.S. lawyer, (1902-1994)*

All autobiography is self-indulgent.

- *Daphne Du Maurier, British novelist, (1907-1989)*

Little League baseball is a very good thing because it kept the parents off the streets.

- *Yogi Berra, (1925 -)*

Bureaucracy is the art of making the possible impossible. - *Javier Pascual Salcedo*

The generation of random numbers is too important to be left to chance.

- *Robert R. Coveyou, Oak Ridge National Laboratory*

When I die, I'm leaving my body to science fiction. - *Steven Wright, Canadian comedian, (1955 -)*

Carriages without horses shall go, and accidents fill the world with woe. - *Anonymous*

Charisma means looking like everyone else.

- *Marshall McLuhan, (1911-1980)*

I regard golf as an expensive way of playing marbles. - *Gilbert K. Chesterton, (1874-1936)*

Patience is not waiting, it's how you act while you're waiting. - *Anonymous*

History is a pack of lies about events that never happened told by people who weren't there.

- *George Santayana, Spanish born American philosopher (1863-1952)*

If you believe everything you read, you better not read. - *Japanese proverb*

It's better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared. - *Whitney Young, director National Urban League, (1921-1971)*

Opportunities multiply as they are seized.

- *Sun Tzu, Chinese general, (544?-496? BC)*

NEW FROM WING AND A PRAYER PRESS

Southern Connecticut Mensa member Jerry Brooker has recently had his new book of poems called "A Quiet Conversation," published by Wing and a Prayer Press.

Faith Vicinanza, publisher Hanover Press, 2002 "He uses everything: humor, politics, love, history ... to render a poetic adventure that is playful, erotic, and gentle."

Sandra Bishop Ebner, author of *The Space Between* "The poet's intimate conversations with the self with an originality of language that deserves notice."

Erik Zork Alan, author *Stolen Snapshots* "He paints lush, linguistic landscapes and makes me marvel at life's mysteries. He understands the sinner and the saint."

The book can be purchased (\$10) on the Internet at www.Amazon.com Advantage (Literature and Fiction/Poetry/Gerard Brooker).

About the Author Mr. Brooker has had over 250 poems and articles published, most of them about inequities on this earth. He has lived and traveled widely and has been recognized for his humanitarian work, most recently with two honorary degrees, and was inducted into the National Teachers' Hall of Fame in 1998.

LISTING BY TOWN

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Mr Allen Franklin Trickey	27 Federal Rd	Shelton	CT	06484 3412	(203) 929-7979
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Mr Francis Noel Carten	17 Mill Stone Cir	Stamford	CT	06903 3513	(203) 329-1771
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Denise O LeVan	44 Strawberry Hill Ave Apt 1e	Stamford	CT	06902 2698	(203) 531-8096
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Andrew Rink	32 Ridge Brook Dr	Stamford	CT	06903 1235	(203) 595-9555
MaryAnn P Smith	36 Cerretta St Apt 33	Stamford	CT	06907 1817	(203) 595-0135
Eric D Strom	2289 Bedford St Apt B4	Stamford	CT	06905 3909	(203) 325-4083
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James Robert Mizer	7365 Main StPMB #181	Stratford	CT	06614 1300	(203) 522-1959
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Maud H Purcell	141 Captains Walk	Stratford	CT	06614 4453	(203) 348-9920
Charles Schoenfeld	75 Pinehurst Rd	Stratford	CT	06614 2525	(203) 378-4616
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Dean Fabrizio	6306 Main St	Trumbull	CT	06611 2033	(203) 452-7779
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