

# **The Constellation**

**February 2011**



**Blink!**

Whether you blinked or not, I suspect that one simple word drew your attention, if only for, well, a blink. I think that's what the publisher had in mind when the author, Malcolm Gladwell, submitted his book, *blink*—get their attention first, the rest will follow. *Blink* is non-fiction, an area I don't get into much because I publish and teach fiction, but my wife read the book for a class she was taking and offered it to me. I read it in a day. It's essentially about the choices we make without engaging our brains, something we Mensans wouldn't even contemplate. But of course, we do not engage our brains from time to time. We make snap decisions based on previous input, we assume someone is capable because they 'look' the part. The book cites Warren G. Harding, probably one of the bottom three presidents. He looked the part, though and the American public ate him up. The book also cites Pepsi and Coke and the sip taste war they waged in the seventies, tests that brought on New Coke because Pepsi was kicking their butts in sip tests. So Coke knee-jerk reacted and changed their formula. If they'd taken a closer look they would have realized that sweet sips—Pepsi—are most always more satisfying and that when a full can is drunk, Coke still comes out on top.

*Blink* is a fun, quick read and well-written. Sure, it's predictable in spots but anything 300 pages long is predictable in spots. I do recommend it, though, if only because it has the 'ah-hah' thing going for it. You know what I'm talking about, when you read something and your mind says, 'ah-hah', I never thought of it like that. Happy Valentine's Day, and happy reading, your Newsletter Editor, Tim Wright.

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## Good Wine Cheap (and good food to go with it)

By John Grover

Well, I am now suffering the consequences of numerous culinary depredations of the holiday season. How can the pounds appear on the bathroom scales so quickly? Another Christmas miracle? I rather doubt it. In order to recover from this situation, I may have to actually consume fewer calories. BUMMER! A dish prepared on a recent edition of the Today Show was the inspiration for this month's column. This recipe, based upon a Mexican classic, is so good that it doesn't feel like dieting.

The wine this month is the 2009 Wildflower Valdiguie from J. Lohr Wines of Monterey, California. The Valdiguie grape originates from the Languedoc-Roussillon region of Southwest France. This wine starts with an aromatic bouquet of boysenberry and cherry. It then produces cherry and raspberry tastes with a bit of acidity and pucker in the mouth. It should be served cool (55 to 60 degrees). The wine has a lot of characteristics of Beaujolais and can be served with a wide range of ethnic dishes. This wine is available for between \$9 and \$10 a bottle.

*Turkey pozole (hominy) soup with green chilies (by Michael Lomonaco, executive chef at Porter House New York, and broadcast recently on the Today Show)*

***Ingredients: 2 pounds turkey meat cut into 1 inch cubes; 1/4 cup olive oil; 2 large onions, peeled and chopped; 2 red peppers, seeded and chopped; 1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped; 2 tablespoons ground cumin; 2 tablespoons Ancho chili powder; 2 tablespoons peeled, chopped garlic; 1 15 ounce can chopped green chilies; 1 cup crushed tomatoes; 2 quarts chicken broth; 1 28 ounce can golden or white hominy (pozole); 1/4 cup roughly chopped cilantro leaves; 1/2 cup chopped scallions; Sour cream; Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper***

Pour the oil into a large, heavy-bottomed pot and heat over medium heat. Season the turkey with salt and pepper. Add to the pot and sauté in until well-browned. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the turkey to a bowl and set aside.

Add the onions, red pepper and jalapeño to the pot and brown until golden, which takes approximately seven minutes. When the onion begins to caramelize, return the turkey to the pot, sprinkle with the cumin and Ancho chili powder, stir in the garlic, green chilies and tomatoes. Add the chicken broth plus 2 cups of water, stir and bring it to a boil over high heat. Lower then heat and let the chili simmer, partially covered, for one hour. Add the hominy. Continue to cook until the turkey is tender, which takes approximately 15 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning and serve with cilantro, scallions and sour cream as a topping. Yields 3 to 4 quarts. This recipe can be easily cut in half.

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## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 PM. **First Thirstday at The Anchor Bar**, Marketplace Mall, Henrietta, NY. Join your fellow Mensans for a bite, a beverage and bit of conversation at this newly opened bar and grill in the mall.

Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM. **International Food Night**, Phuket Thai Cuisine, 2122 Empire Blvd, Webster, NY. A yearly favorite! The menu is highlighted by dishes such as Fresh Spring Rolls, Green Papaya Salad, Chicken Satay, Pineapple Shrimp Curry, Thai Fried Rice and a delicious Pad Thai! 585-671-8410.

<http://www.phuketthaicuisine.com/>

Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 3:30PM. **Ontario Pathways Hike** with views of cascading waterfalls and vistas of Flint Creek. Parking area is on the south side of Rte 96, just east of Rte 488 intersection in Phelps. "Easy hiking, generally level trail" rating by Richard & Sue Freeman, authors of Take A Hike (Footprint Press). To be followed by supper at Phelps Hotel Restaurant, 90 Main St./Rte 96. 315-548-5200.

Tuesday, February 22<sup>th</sup>, 5:00PM. **Diner Night**, Mike's New York Diner, 3423 Winton Place, Rochester NY. Great quality food in great portions at a restaurant with a very friendly staff. I love New York! 585-475-1863

<http://www.mikesnewyorkdiner.com/index.html>

Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00PM. **First Thirstday at Jitters**, 910 Elmgrove Rd, Gates, NY. For something a little different, while the weather is still chilly, let's meet for a hot beverage at Jitters! 585-426-5885

<http://www.gotthejitters.com/gatesjittershome.html>