

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT MENSA CHRONICLE

If you or someone you know would like to be a speaker at our monthly dinner, please contact Activities Coordinator Nancy O'Neil at NancyOneil@aol.com or 203-791-1668. The dinner is held the third Saturday of the month.

Membership Renewal: If you have an annual Mensa membership, your membership will be expiring at the end of April. You should have received a renewal notice in the mail in January. You can return that form or visit www.us.mensa.org to renew.

ARCHIVED COPIES OF THE CHRONICLE

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

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SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR MARCH

Friday, March 4, 6:00

Picture This Gallery Opening Reception

606 Post Road East, Westport (203) 227-6861. Runs from March 4th through April 2nd. Architectural snapshots captured on canvas by David Barton. Hynotic renderings in oil of the water's surface by John Harris. Opening reception with the Artists on Friday March 4th from 6 to 8 pm. Questions? Contact Catherine Musor (203) 856-6316 or rin@optonline.net (include MENSA in subject line)

Friday, March 11, 7:00

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner

Monthly dinner at the Old Sorrento Restaurant, Newtown Road, DANBURY, CT Interested Mensans should contact Ward Mazzucco at (203) 744-1929, ext 25, wjm@danburylaw.com, or Rev Bill Loring at (203) 794-1389, frbill@mags.net.

Saturday, March 12, 11:40 am

Mensa goes to the Movies: Downfall

Join us at the (fantastically restored!) Avon in downtown Stamford to see Downfall, Academy Award nominee for Best Foreign Film. The film is "a compelling, completely absorbing, and blackly hilarious reconstruction of Hitler's increasingly deranged final days in the bunker as the Red Army gradually advances, told from the point of view of der FÄhrer's personal secretary. (A) cocktail of stupefying denial, paranoid rants, and Third Reich infighting... Bruno Ganz (in) a scenery-chewing powerhouse performance. I couldn't take my eyes off it." - Gavin Smith, Film Comment, Nov/Dec 04 Lunch afterwards at local diner (by consensus). RSVP/for further information contact Catherine Musor at (203) 856-6316 or rin@optonline.net (please put MENSA in the subject line.)

Sunday, March 13, 2:00

CARD PARTY

See CT & Western Massachusetts listings

Friday, March 18, beginning at 5:30/6:00

Mensa Happy Hour

The Black Bear Saloon, 80 Washington Street, South Norwalk, CT (203) 299-0711. The Fairfield County Happy Hour returns! Join us for the scintillating dialogue or just because you have to eat eventually, so it might as well be here.

<http://www.blackbearsono.com> For details, contact Catherine Musor at rin@optonline.net (put MENSA in the subject line) or (203) 856-6316

Saturday, March 19, 7:00.

Monthly Dinner

Connie Marcy will speak on Holistic Nutrition. Before the presentation, we will enjoy dinner in our private dining room at the Stony Hill Inn, 46 Stony Hill Road (right off Exit 8 on Rte. 84), Bethel, CT 06801, (203-743-5533). Dress is casual. Contact Nancy O'Neil, Nancyoneil@aol.com, 203-791-1668, for information and reservations. You MUST call and MAKE RESERVATIONS by Friday, March 18 so we can assure that the restaurant can provide seating. If you make reservations and can't attend, PLEASE call and cancel. Directions from New Haven or Bridgeport: Take Route 25 into Newtown, where it becomes Route 6 West. OR take I-84 and get off at Exit 9 (Route 25 Brookfield). At the end of the ramp take a left if eastbound or a right if westbound. At the first light take a right on to Route 6 West. The hotel is located 2 miles on the right, not far over the Bethel line. From Stamford/Norwalk: Take Route 7 to I-84 and follow the above directions, turning right after exiting I-84.

EVENT FOR YOUNG OR SINGLE MENSANS

As a relatively new member of the CWM chapter, I have attended a few events and been surprised at the low turnout of young members. I am offering to start a monthly event that would appeal to the younger crowd, and also, am consid-

If you wish to comment on articles or submit material, please write or e-mail Jim Mizera at PMB #181, 7365 Main St., Stratford, CT. 06614-1300, Jmizera@hotmail.com. E-mail submissions are preferred. Please include your name, address, and e-mail address or telephone number. Anonymous material will be rejected, although names will be withheld on request. Items will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Currently, the deadline for postal submissions is the 15th of the month preceding publication, and the 20th of the month for e-mail submissions.

ering planning an event for singles only. Without an idea of how many people would be interested, it is difficult to plan. Please email me at winginit04L8@aol.com or call me at 860-309-2554 if you would be interested in either event. I will happy to organize it if there is enough interest.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CHAPTER EVENTS FOR APRIL

Friday, April 8, 7:00.

Southern Connecticut and Connecticut/Western Massachusetts Joint Dinner.

See above listing for details.

Saturday, April 16, 7:00.

Monthly Dinner.

See above listing for details.

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CONNECTICUT AND WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS MENSA CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS

This is not a complete listing WE - Weekly Event, ME - Monthly Event, YE - Yearly Event CT & W. Mass Calendar Editor Gisela Rodriguez, (860) 872-3106, email: lilith@snet.net.

There's also the [CWM-Announce] upcoming events reminder email list, which I send out *approximately* weekly. Subscribe and unsubscribe options are located at <http://lists.us.mensa.org/mailman/listinfo/cwm-announce> for your convenience. Any Mensan who wants to notify their fellow M's about any late-breaking event s/he wants to share with our delightful chapter, please email me ASAP with the details and I'll get it out to the list. You may also check the website www.cwm.us.mensa.org for our calendar updates. - CT & W. Mass Calendar Editor Gisela Rodriguez, (860) 872-3106, email lilith@snet.net.

Mensans on the Radio:

C&WM Mensan Janine Bujalski is on the airwaves every 1st & 3rd Friday 6-10 a.m. on 89.5FM,

WPKN in Bridgeport, CT. There is a limited internet broadcast - about 25 can listen simultaneously at www.wpkn.org. From 6-9 AM there's jazz, blues & music from Brazil and from 9-10 AM the music is from Louisiana, mostly Cajun & zydeco.

Vice LocSec Will Mackey is hosting Friday evening Classics from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. weekly on 91.3 FM, WWUH, in West Hartford. The name of the program is "What You Will" and its focus is chamber music.

MARCH

3, 10, 17, 31 Thursdays 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).

4 Friday 5:30 pm

Happy Hour in Wallingford (ME, 1st Fridays)

Ann Polanski (contact her at 203-269-4565 or ann.polanski@rfsworld.com) hosts us at George's II Restaurant, 950 Yale Avenue, Wallingford, CT 06492 Phone: 269-1059 Directions: Exit 66 off Wilbur Cross Parkway. Turn left (south) onto Rte 5. Take first left onto Yale Avenue. George's II is in the Yale Plaza on the right.

5 Saturday 7:30 - 11:00 pm

Bluegrass Concert

at Unitarian Universalist Coffeehouse, featuring Shoregrass, a group including the talents of our own Barbara Shaw, 60 Huntington Street, New London, CT. Info: Gary Davis (860) 228-8192 Something new in a new venue, three bands showcased, including ShoreGrass, Second Circle, Shady Creek. The Unitarian Church venue regularly hosts a coffeehouse, so the room is perfect to hear these bands up close and personal. \$12 (includes refreshments).

13 Sunday 2:00 pm

LET'S KEEP THE ROLLING CARD PARTY ROLLING!

The first move-around card party was, "hands down" a huge success! Great fun was had by all, and some of us even got to learn a new game. The next card party will be at the home of Larry Schwartz in Trumbull. Please contact Larry for directions by email statguy@juno.com or phone 203-374-6465, but if busy or no answer then 203-257-7918. Please BYOB and some snacks to

share. Hope you can make it!

18 Friday 6pm - 8pm or so

Diner Dinner (ME, 3rd Friday) at Olympia Diner, Rte 5, Newington, just north of the Berlin town line and North East Utilities. Menu ranges from toasted cheese sandwich to steak and fish dinners. Basic bar menu available, no happy hour prices, but the food is good and very reasonable. Please contact Nicole Michaud at (860) 434-7329 or email nirimi@snet.net, Subject: Diner Dinner

25 Friday 5:00 pm

Happy Hour (ME, 4th Friday) Colonial Tymes, 2389 Dixwell Ave, Hamden. Located about 1/2 mile north of Exit 60, Wilbur Cross Parkway. We are now reserving the middle tables on the left as you walk in the bar. Dinner is a possibility if enough people are interested. Come on down and join us this month, we'd love to see ya. Contact Gail Trowbridge (203) 877-4472 or Gail.Trowbridge@att.net.

30 Wednesday 12 Noon

Middlebury Lunch (ME, last Wednesday) at Maggie McFly's in Middlebury, visible on the right from Rte. 63 just south of the Rte 63 and Rte 64 intersection. This intersection is at the end of a long ramp at Exit 17 on Rte 84 west. From this exit, turn left at the 63/64 intersection. If you use Exit 17 on Rte. 84 east (heading toward Hartford), turn left off the exit ramp and see Maggie McFly's on your left. Contact Richard Fogg at 860-274-2370 for more info.

LOOKING WAY AHEAD

May 1, Sunday 3:30 pm

Book Discussion Group

(floating, this time in Woodbridge, CT, west of New Haven) The first meeting of C&WM Mensa's newest book discussion group will focus on Ken Follett's historical novel *The Pillars of the Earth*. There's plenty of time for you to obtain and devour a copy of this long and complex page turner. It's available in most libraries and in paperback and trade paper. If you prefer audio-books, it's available in both unabridged and abridged versions. Do yourself (and your fellow discussants) a favor and listen to the unabridged one if

at all possible. Amazon's write-up is available here: http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0451166892/qid=1060826692/sr=2-1/ref=sr_2_1/104-8477391-9634349 Or try <http://www.ken-follett.com/bibliography/pillars.html> For further information, contact our first meeting's host Manny Ratafia at manny@ratafia.net

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

April 8-10

STATEN ISLAND RG

STATEN ISLAND, NY The New York experience and free parking.

Registration \$45 to 1/31; \$50 to 2/28; \$55 post-marked before 3/31; \$60 after.
Saturday night banquet: \$42.

Staten Island Hotel

(71) 698-5000 SR/DR/TR/QR \$110

Checks payable to NYRG.

Registrar: Karen-Coopersmith-Tobin, 20 Wisteria Court, Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852 (732) 438-006. IlanasMom@aol.com

April 15-17

MIND GAMES 2005

HOSTED BY TAMPA BAY MENSA

An intense weekend of play. Mensans judge and critique games released in the past year and award the coveted Mensa Select seal to the top five. Past winners include Scattergories, Trivial Pursuit, and Taboo. Mind Games begins on Friday afternoon and ends Saturday morning.

Double Tree Hotel - Tampa Westshore Airport
4500 W Cypress St., Tampa, FL 33607, (813) 879-4800. Mention MENSA to get a special hotel rate of \$99 per night (plus tax). The cut-off date for getting the special Mensa rate is March 15, 2005.

REGISTRATION through April 1 = \$65. Contacts:
Sylvia Zadorozny, Mind Games 2005
Chair: MGChair@mindgames.us.mensa.org
Kathy Crum: AsstMGChair@mindgames.us.mensa.org
Registration: Registration@mindgames.us.mensa.org
Register online now at mindgames.us.mensa.org!



Send your registration to:
Mind Games 2005, American Mensa, Ltd., 1229
Corporate Dr. W., Arlington, TX 76006-6103

You can also call 817-607-0060 x122 using your
Visa or MasterCard.

Please direct registration questions to
Registration@mindgames.us.mensa.org

2005 Post-AG Cruise

The 2005 Annual Gathering in New Orleans will end with a Mensa cruise to Jamaica, the Cayman Islands and Cozumel. Extra-special pricing until August 5, 2004. Details at <http://www.suitecruising.com/ag2.htm>

WORD ORIGINS

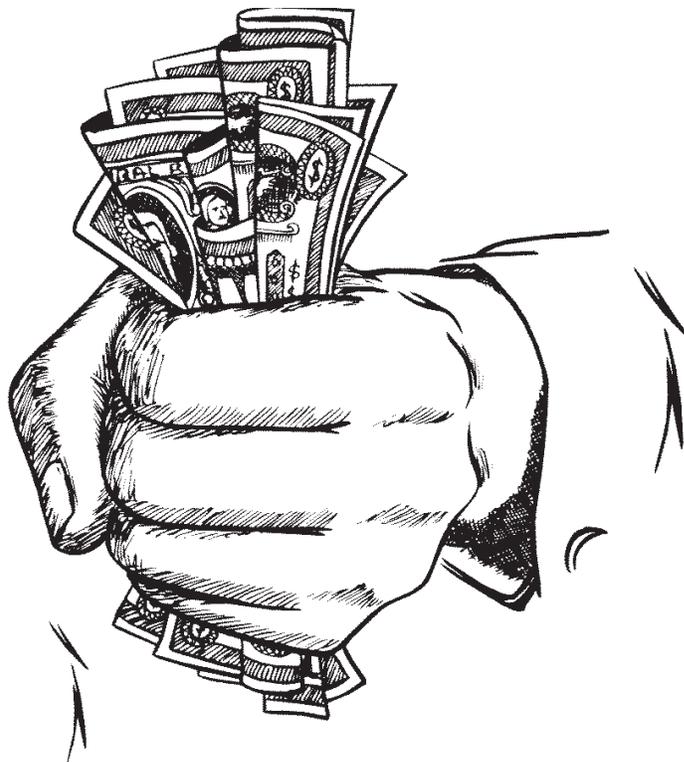
Many financial terms have Latin roots that can . Here are a few of them.

Interest - This comes from the Latin word "interesse", which means "the interval" or "to be between." In Roman law, it denoted something different from what it is today. It was an extra sum debtors were required to pay for late payments.

Usury - In ancient Rome, "usura" was what we call interest today, namely a regular charge for a loan. It was customarily paid monthly. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, commercial activity collapsed, and loans were mostly to people in distress. The Catholic Church forbade "usury" on these loans. After the 11th century, trade increased and "interesse" was permitted. Gradually, political and Church officials came to tolerate "usura" again, and by the 16th century it was becoming standard for business loans. Usury acquired its current meaning of an exorbitant rate of interest.

Credit - This derives from the Latin word "creditum", a loan or debt, which traces back further to "credo" - to trust or place confidence in someone or something. fiduciary - As an adjective, this means the holding of something in trust for another. As a noun, it is a trustee. It comes from the Latin "fiduciarus", from "fiducia" - trust.

Pound - The British pound was originally the pound sterling. In medieval England, the sterling was the smallest unit of currency, and got its name from the star, or "steorra" in Middle English, that was embossed on it. Later, a pound of these became the larger unit, the pound sterling.



FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Marghretta McBean

Prejudice: an adverse judgement or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts. I was first appalled, then angry, and finally saddened by the vitriol, rudeness and outright hatred displayed by some Mensans as evidenced by their letters to the Bulletin editor regarding Michelle Wojtaszek's cover picture on the December 2004 issue. That supposedly intelligent people could "know" someone's sexual, religious, moral and personal history based solely on a photograph is not only ludicrous but speaks volumes about some segments of our Mensan society.

For years, many of the Blacks in Mensa have been pooh-poohed when they spoke of racial slurs or slights encountered at some Mensan events. Well, it's unfortunate that it took an attractive white woman with tattoos to bring to light what has been, to my mind, a dirty little secret: there are quite a few Mensans who do not like people who do not look like them, and they are not in the least bit hesitant in making their feelings known.

When I attend AMC (American Mensa Committee - Mensa's board of directors) meetings and discussion turns to recruiting new members and retaining them, I repeat again and again, most people want to feel welcome if they are to join any group. If they look around and don't see folks like themselves, a subtle message is being sent. It takes a great deal of confidence and inner strength to be the only "different" one in a group.

Would I ever get tattooed? No, because I've never seen any design I would like to wear for the rest of my life. (I do have a large collection of temporary tattoos, though). Would I ever get pierced? No, I'm chicken and it's just not moi. But I will defend to the end anyone's desire to tattoo, pierce and otherwise adorn their bodies. I may not always find the results attractive, but hey, it's their body. All I ask is that all protruding metal be removed prior to our (ahem) socializing.

I'm proud that Michelle is a member of our region and think she deserves praise for the graciousness with which she has handled this controversy.

We are half way through winter, so keeping warm is still essential. The Mexicans got it right: chocolate and chile peppers, a sublime combination.

MOLE NEGRO

12 dry Chilhuacle Negro chiles
 4 dry Mulato chiles
 2 dry Chipotle chiles
 2 tablets "Abuelita" Mexican chocolate
 1 cup peanuts
 1 cup sesame seeds
 1 cup almonds
 4 pitted prunes
 1 stale hard roll
 1 dry corn tortilla
 6 whole cloves
 4 whole black pepper corns
 1 2" piece Mexican canela (soft_bark cinnamon)
 1 teaspoon oregano
 1 small bay leaf
 chicken stock or vegetable broth

1. Remove seeds and veins from chiles. Roast chiles in 350E F. oven for 10-15 minutes or until dry and crumbly, set aside.
2. In a small saut pan, toast peanuts, sesame seeds and almonds until sesame seeds are just toasted, set aside.
3. Over open fire on gas range toast tortilla until slightly charred, set aside.
4. In a spice blender/coffee grinder add cloves, pepper corns, cinnamon stick, oregano, and bay leaf and blend until smooth.
5. In a food processor add all ingredients and pulse until mixture resembles a smooth paste, adding stock/broth if needed. This paste keeps well refrigerated or frozen. For sauce, mix 3 cups boiling stock/broth with, cup paste.

PUZZLES & QUESTIONS

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

1. What is wrong with the maxim, "If you build it, they will come"?
2. What is the average commuting time to work in the United States?
3. List some questions that people answer impulsively.
4. What jargon do you want to drop from your speech?
5. Ideally, how long should spring, summer, and fall be?
6. Distinguish between an obsession and a compulsion.
7. If they randomly switched all major league baseball managers, do you think it would produce much different results?
8. Name a dozen pairs that are difficult to balance.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES:

3. What is the population density of Connecticut? Of the United States?

A: The population density of Connecticut is 702.9 people per square mile. The population density of the U.S. is 79.6/sq. mi.

4. In the stock market, how long do the average bull markets and bear markets last?

A: The average bull market in the U.S. stock market lasts about 3-1/2 years and the average bear market lasts about 1 year and 2 months.

5. What percentage of their shots did National Basketball Association players make last year?

A; In 2004, NBA players made 43.9% of their total shots - 46% of their 2-point shots and 34.7% of their 3-point shots. On a point-weighted basis, they made 47.1% of their shots.

THE READING EDGE - WHAT'S YOUR READING SPEED?

Do you know what your reading speed is? There is an online test that can give you a quick estimate. The Reading Edge, a Wallingford, CT company, has a test at their website www.the-reading-edge.com. The tests take only a minute and calculate your reading speed instantly. For a more comprehensive test, the company a free demo that you can download that will test not only your speed but also your comprehension. The software can be set for different grade levels to test children as well as adults.

The company reports that the average person reads at a speed of between 200-300 words a minute but that people who enjoy reading can read more than 400 words per minute, and that some people can even read well at more than 800 words a minute.

The Reading Edge also offers books, tapes, teleclasses, and personal lessons to help people read faster and more efficiently. For more information, visit their website at www.the-reading-edge.com or contact them at info@the-reading-edge.com

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NOTED AND QUOTED

Pessimism is only the name that men of weak nerves give to wisdom.

- Bernard De Voto, (1897 - 1955)

The country has charms only for those not obliged to stay there. - Edouard Manet

Those who lack the courage will always find a philosophy to justify it. - Albert Camus, (1913 - 1969)

The faculty expands its activity to fit whatever space is available, so that more space is always required. - Thomas L. Martin

Life is a garment we continuously alter, but which never seems to fit. - David McCord

A life of pleasure is the most unpleasant thing in the world. - Oliver Goldsmith, (1728 - 1774)

Women want mediocre men, and men are working hard to become as mediocre as possible. - Margaret Mead, (1901 - 1978), 1958

Miracles sometimes occur, but one has to work terribly hard for them. - Chaim Weizmann,

It's silly to go on pretending that under the skin we are all brothers. The truth is more likely that under the skin we are all cannibals, assassins, traitors, liars, hypocrites, poltroons.

- Henry Miller (1891-1980)

Little things console us because little things afflict us. - Blaise Pascal, (1623 - 1662)

Life is something that everyone should try at least once. - Michael Moncur

It is the doom of men that they forget.

- Edmund Mallory, (? - 1471), "Le Morte d'Artur", 1470

Admit your errors before someone else exaggerates them. - Andrew V. Mason, MD

Men are apt to deceive themselves in big things, but they rarely do so in particulars.

- Niccolo Machiavelli, (1469 - 1527)

He who hesitates is interrupted. - Franklin P. Jones

If at first you don't succeed, failure may be your thing. - Warren Miller

In the long run all battles are lost, and so are all wars. - H.L. Mencken, (1880 - 1956), *Sententiae*

Analogies decide nothing, that is true, but they can make one feel more at home.

- Sigmund Freud, (1856 - 1939), *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*

The difficulty of getting anything started increases with the square of the of the number of people involved. - Jim MacGregor

The aging process has you firmly in its grasp if you never get the urge to throw a snowball.

- Doug Larson, *United Features Syndicate*

In fact, one thing that I have noticed . . . is that all of these conspiracy theories depend on the perpetrators being endlessly clever. I think you'll find the facts also work if you assume everyone is endlessly stupid. - Brian E. Moore



RUMINATIONS

SELECTIONS FROM *Miscellanies*
(1770) John Armstrong

OF GENIUS

There is a standard of right and wrong in the nature of things, of beauty and deformity, both in the natural and moral world. And as different minds happen to be more or less exquisite, the more or less sensibly do they perceive the various degrees, of good and bad, and are the more or less susceptible of being charmed with what is right or beautiful, and disgusted with what is wrong or deformed. It is chiefly this sensibility that constitutes genius; to which a sound head and a good heart are as effectual as a lively imagination. And a man of true genius must necessarily have as exquisite a feeling of the moral beauties, as of whatever is great or beautiful in the works of nature; or masterly in the arts which imitate nature, in poetry, painting, statuary, and music.

On the other side, where the heart is very bad, the genius and taste, if there happen to be any pretensions to them, will be found shocking and unnatural. NERO would be nothing less than a poet; but his verses were what one may call most "villainously" bad. His taste of magnificence and luxury was horribly glaring, extravagant and unnatural to the last degree.

CALIGULA's taste was so outrageously wrong, that he detested the works of the sweet MANTUAN poet more passionately than ever MOECENAS admired them; and if VIRGIL had unfortunately lived down to those times in which that monster appeared, he would probably have been tortured to death for no other crime but that he wrote naturally, and like an honest man.

True genius may be said to consist of a perfect polish of soul, which receives and reflects the images that fall upon it, without warping or distortion. And this fine polish of soul is, I believe, constantly attended with what philosophers call the moral truth.

There are minds which receive objects truly, and feel the impressions they ought naturally to make, in a very lively manner, but want the facul-

ty of reflecting them; as there are people who, I suppose, feel all the charms of poetry without being poets themselves.

OF TASTE

Our notion of taste may be easily understood by what has been said upon the subject of genius; for mere good taste is nothing else but genius without the power of execution.

It must be born; and is to be improved chiefly by being accustomed, and the earlier the better, to the most exquisite objects of taste in its various kinds. For the taste in writing and painting, and in every thing else, is insensibly formed upon what we are accustomed to; as well as taste in eating and drinking. One who from his youth has been used to drink nothing but heavy dismal port, will not immediately acquire a relish for claret or burgundy.

In the most stupid ages there is more good taste than one would at first sight imagine. Even the present, abuse it with what contemptuous epithets you please, cannot be totally void of it. As long as there are noble humane and generous dispositions amongst mankind, there must be good taste. For in general, I do not say always, the taste will be in proportion to those moral qualities and that sensibility of mind from which they take their rise. And while many, amongst the great and the learned, are allowed to have taste for no better reason than that it is their own opinion, it is often possessed by those who are not conscious of it, and dream as little of pretending to it as to a star and garter. An honest farmer, or shepherd, who is acquainted with no language but what is spoken in his own county, may have a much truer relish of the English writers than the most dogmatical pedant that ever erected himself into a commentator, and from his Gothic chair, with an ill-bred arrogance, dictated false criticism to the gaping multitude.

But even those who are endued with good natural taste, often judge implicitly and by rote, without ever consulting their own taste. Instances of this passive indolence, or rather this unconsciousness of one's own faculties, appear every day; not only in the fine arts, but in cases where the mere "taste", according to the original meaning of the word, is alone concerned. For I am positive there

RUMINATIONS CONT.

are many thousands who, if they were to bring their own palate to a severe examination, would discover that they really find a more delicious flavour in mutton than in venison, in flounder than in turbut, and yet prefer middling or bad venison to the best mutton; that is, what is scarcest and dearest, and consequently what is, from the folly of mankind, the most in vogue, to what is really the most agreeable to their own private taste.

In matter of taste, the public, for the most part, suffers itself to be led by a few who perhaps are really no judges; but who, under the favour of some advantages of title, place, or fortune, set up for judges, and are implicitly followed even by those who have taste. These washy dictators have learnt at school to admire such authors as have for ages been possessed of an indisputed renown: but they would never have been the first to have discovered strokes of true genius in

a co-temporary writer, though they had lived at the court of AUGUSTUS or of Q. ELIZABETH.

So undistinguishing is our taste, that if the most torpid dunce this fruitful age can boast of, could by some artful imposture prepossess the public, that the most insipid of all his own bread-sauce compositions, to be published next winter, was a piece MILTON's, or any other celebrated author, recovered from dust and obscurity, it would be received with universal applause; and perhaps be translated into French before the town had doated six weeks upon it. One might venture to say too, that if a work of true spirit and genius was to be introduced into the world, under the name of some writer of low reputation, it would be rejected even by the greatest part of those who pretend to lead the taste. And no wonder, while an eminent vintner has mistaken his own old hock at nine shillings the bottle for that at five.

KICK IRRATIONAL

Brian Lord is a cartoonist and member of Middle Tennessee Mensa (Nashville area). His cartoon Kick Irrational is read weekly by people in 192 cities, 46 states and 9 countries via the Internet. You can see the Kick Irrational comics page at www.kickirrational.com



KICK IRRATIONAL by Brian Lord

www.KickComics.com



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

By John Grover

This month we go to the lands down under for our wine and recipe. Australia has been making great inroads into the U.S. market over the past decade and a half with some very affordable wines. But newcomer New Zealand has also made quite a splash on the American scene with some wines of startling high quality.

The wine this month is a Sauvignon Blanc from the Marlborough region of New Zealand's Southern island. The wines from this area have quickly gained a great reputation. This particular wine is the 2004 vintage from Chimney Creek Vineyard. It possesses an intense aroma and flavor that you would expect from only much more expensive wines. The first thing you taste is a distinctive nose of gooseberries so common to this grape. Then the taste of citrus and green apples fills your mouth, and finishes cleanly. This wine will go well with a wide range of chicken and-seafood dishes; and, it has enough character to stand up to spicy Asian dishes. I paid \$9 a bottle for it.

**AUSTRALIAN SHRIMP ON THE BARBIE
(FROM RECIPESOURCE.COM WEBSITE)**

Ingredients:

Marinade:

1/2 cup (1 stick) melted butter

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup minced fresh herbs (parsley, thyme and cilantro)

3 tbsp fresh lemon juice

3 garlic clove, crushed

1 tbsp minced shallot

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

1 and 1/2 lbs large shrimp unpeeled (the shells help to keep in the moisture during cooking);
spinach leaves and lemon slices

Combine marinade ingredients in large bowl. Mix in shrimp. Marinate at room temperature 1 hour or in the refrigerator 5 hours, stirring occasionally. Prepare barbecue with medium hot coals. Thread shrimp on narrow skewers (wooden skewers should be soaked at least 30 minutes before grilling.) Grill shrimp until just opaque, about 2 minutes per side. Line platter with spinach. Arrange skewers on platter. Garnish with lemon slices and serve. Makes 8 servings. There was "no shrimp left behind" when we served this dish at a recent party.

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

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.

THE FEBRUARY DINNER

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

IN February, Mensans met at the Stony Hill Inn to hear Susan Graybill speak about one of the most beloved novels in American literature, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Ms. Graybill shared many insights about the author's background and the story's Southern setting, and engaged the audience in a lively discussion of its many rich themes, subtly drawn characters, and skillful blending of plot and subplot.

Ms. Graybill has a special interest in *To Kill a Mockingbird* because she was born in the South and teaches the novel in English classes in the Wilton school system. She helped organize a discussion on the book and its 1963 film version at the Wilton library last year, an event where Mary Badham and Phillip Alford, two of the child actors who starred in the movie, spoke about their roles. Susan also visited Monroeville, Alabama, the hometown of Harper Lee, and explored many of the sites that Ms. Lee drew on in painting her portrait of the fictional town of Maycomb. Our speaker conveyed the ambience of these surroundings and some of her conversations with the actors and people who knew Harper Lee to give us a vivid look at the world of the novel.

To Kill a Mockingbird is a Depression-era story of the events in Maycomb, Alabama, when Atticus Finch, a lawyer of conscience, defends Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman. The novel is told through the eyes of Scout, the young daughter of Atticus, and this gives it much of its poignancy. Ms. Graybill brought out both the harsh injustice and

deep compassion in the tale by illuminating the lessons Scout and her older brother Jem learn about courage, evil, understanding, and sympathy from their father and from their reclusive neighbor, Boo Radley. She aptly described the naive but precocious Scout as someone "who tells it like it is but doesn't always know what she's looking at." But she also helped us see how Scout grew up and learned moral lessons in this incongruous world where decent and neighborly folks condone or approve miscarriages of justice.

Susan also spoke about how she brings out the lessons of *Mockingbird* to students who don't have much comprehension of the sufferings under segregation or the courage conveyed by men like Atticus Finch. She discussed some of the historical material she uses and the questions she asks students to help them, as Harper Lee strived to do, walk around in the skin of others.

The audience asked a variety of questions about the author, characters, setting, plot, symbols, and themes of *Mockingbird*, and Susan offered some valuable background. She told about how Harper Lee created the characters from people she lived with in Monroeville and from composites of small-town Southern personalities. Similarly, she commented on how the author's depiction of the trial of Tom Robinson borrowed from history, especially the infamous Scottsboro Boys' trial.

The spirited discussion kept the talk going into the late evening but many in the audience would have been happy to continue going till midnight. A mixture of old and new faces attended the dinner, but all enjoyed the evening and gained from Susan Graybill a deeper appreciation of a novel that has become a literary classic.



MIND AND MONEY

THE FALL OF BETA

RATIONAL investors expect a greater return for buying a risky stock than for a safe stock - they are risk averse. This idea was part of Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT) laid out by economist Harry Markowitz in 1952. In the early 1960s, William Sharpe built on this theory to come up with the Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM). The CAPM was important because it came up with a single measure of systematic risk, which is risk that cannot be diversified away. This is the risk that investors would gain a greater return for. Sharpe's measure, which came to be known as "beta," measured the volatility of a stock by comparing how much a stock moves in relation to the market. If a stock moves 1.5% when the market moves 1%, then the stock has a beta of 1.5. The Capital Asset Pricing Market came to dominate teaching in business schools and sophisticated investment thinking in the 1970s, and beta became the common measure of risk. For their seminal contributions, Dr. Markowitz and Dr. Sharpe, shared the 1990 Nobel Prize in economics with Dr. Merton Miller, another financial economist.

A funny thing happened soon afterwards, however. One of the leading thinkers in Modern Portfolio Theory, Dr. Eugene Fama, did a study that contradicted a 1973 study of his that had helped establish beta as the prevailing measure of risk. Fama's new study, co-authored in 1992 with Kenneth French, investigated risks and returns on 9,500 stocks from 1963 to 1990. They found no relationship between beta and returns. Low-beta stocks did just about as well as high-beta stocks. Fama concluded that "beta as the sole variable in explaining returns on stocks ... is dead."

If beta is dead, does it mean that investors are irrational or does it mean that we just need a better measure of risk? This is where debate rages. Value investors say value stocks, stocks with low Price-Earnings (P/E) ratios, have higher returns without higher risk because investors irrationally

extrapolate the past into the future. They say that many previous studies starting in the 1970s show this but were overlooked because of the enthusiasm for the CAPM model. Other critics point out that stocks tend to have short-run momentum; stocks that have done well or poorly during the previous months tend to continue the same performance over the next month. This means the price is not adjusting quickly to new conditions. But Fama and some supporters say his studies have found a better measure of risk - the "three factor model", which show that book-to-market value and company size are good measures of risk and they correlate well with returns.

There has always been critics of beta who have said that beta values are not stable, and that volatility is not a good standard of risk because it measures upward swings the same as downward swings. But after Fama's 1992 study, research turned to P/E ratios, book-to-market ratios, high leverage, and size to see whether their statistical success depends on higher risk. In 1993 Fama and French did a follow-up regression analysis that suggested that small-cap stocks and value stocks have higher returns not simply because they are small and low in P/E, but because they are riskier. Value theorists have produced results showing value investing working independently of risk for periods from about 1973 to 1993, but other studies extending back further seem to nullify this edge. Neither the Fama/French study nor other studies have been able to explain stock price momentum, however. But high trading costs from high turnover would probably make momentum strategies impractical.

The three-factor risk model is being used more in analyzing the performance of funds, so it has won some ground. But value investing and small cap investing, regardless of the reason, seem to have worked well not just in the U.S. market but in almost all other stock markets. Although the picture has gotten more complicated in the last dozen years, researchers will continue to investigate risks and returns.

POETRY CORNER**March**

Helen Hunt Jackson (1830 -1885)

MONTH which the warring ancients strangely
 styled
 The month of war,--as if in their fierce ways
 Were any month of peace!--in thy rough days
 I find no war in Nature, though the wild
 Winds clash and clang, and broken boughs are
 piled
 As feet of writhing trees. The violets raise
 Their heads without affright, without amaze,
 And sleep through all the din, as sleeps a child.
 And he who watches well may well discern
 Sweet expectation in each living thing.
 Like pregnant mother the sweet earth doth
 yearn;
 In secret joy makes ready for the spring;
 And hidden, sacred, in her breast doth bear
 Annunciation lilies for the year.

SPRING

by Anacreon (c.572-488 BC)

Translated by Thomas Stanley, 1651

SEE the Spring herself discloses,
 And the Graces gather roses;
 See how the becalmed seas
 Now their swelling waves appease;
 How the duck swims, how the crane
 Comes from winter home again;
 See how Titan's cheerful ray
 Chaseth the dark clouds away;
 Now in their new robes of green
 Are the plowman's labors seen:
 Now the lusty teeming Earth
 Springs each hour with a new birth;
 Now the olive blooms: the vine
 Now doth with plump pendants shine;
 And with leaves and blossoms now
 Freshly bourgeons every bough.

The Hardship of Accounting

Robert Frost, (1875 - 19)

NEVER ask of money spent
 Where the spender thinks it went.
 Nobody was ever meant
 To remember or invent
 What he did with every cent.

Dreams in the Dusk

Carl Sandburg

Dreams in the dusk,
 Only dreams closing the day
 And with the day's close going back
 To the gray things, the dark things,
 The far, deep things of dreamland.

Dreams, only dreams in the dusk,
 Only the old remembered pictures
 Of lost days when the day's loss
 Wrote in tears the heart's loss.

Tears and loss and broken dreams
 May find your heart at dusk.



MENTAL MATTERS

WHY WE FORGET

PEOPLE forget much and they forget for many reasons. Some memories never really get stored, while others are stored but soon lost. Still others may be stored but fade or become distorted. Memories can be lost during coding, storage, or retrieval because at any stage of memory, there are pitfalls.

Some events never get beyond our sensory memories - they are never really encoded in our minds. This type of memory loss occurs when people don't pay attention, don't really hear, don't understand, don't care or don't need to remember something, or get distracted. Sometimes, several of these reasons can conspire to weaken memory. But if something doesn't get into memory, it can't be retrieved.

When attention flags, memory falters. Sometimes conditions are tranquil, but people pay inadequate attention because of sleepiness, day-dreaming, or lingering conflicts. The brain waves of people who are ready to respond to something are much different than those who aren't - they show an "expectancy wave." The minds of passive thinkers are adrift and need to be anchored, which they usually can do by starting to write or organize ideas - anything to put their minds into readiness.

Attention doesn't always wander off course, however. Sometimes it is pushed off course by interruptions and distractions. It's certainly more difficult to pay attention to multiple things than to just one thing. Although some people pride themselves on their ability to multitask, this usually doesn't work very well unless the tasks are automatic or simple. Dividing attention diminishes attention. Our short-term memories are limited, so our own new thoughts can easily displace current thoughts. Any new sight, sound, or thought can interfere with immediate memory.

It's not just competing sights, sounds, and tasks that interfere with memory. Sometimes new learning interferes with old memories. This is known as retroactive inhibition. Experiments show that people who learn one new task immediately after another one forget more of the first task than people who just go to sleep. Actually,

any activity after learning hinders memory more than sleep. Fortunately, people remember much more of the general or major points than they do of the less important or detailed aspects.

Proactive inhibition, the opposite of retroactive inhibition, occurs when old memories interfere with new learning. When people are asked to learn successive groups of words, they typically remember fewer of each group as they go along. But they remember much more when there is less similarity in the word categories. The greater the contrast in categories, the more people remember.

Lack of understanding also hinders our memory for new ideas. It takes more effort to learn something new because we don't have related facts that we can connect it to. We don't have the background knowledge with which we can make associations. Psychological tests show that subjects don't learn nonsense material nearly as well as material that has some meaning to them. Entirely new material isn't nonsense but it is difficult to make sense of and to organize. Although some information can enter long-term memory without effort or awareness, complex matters take conscious effort, attention, and intent to learn. Old dogs can learn new tricks, but they first have to focus to get them into memory. To keep them in memory, they probably have to find a way to connect new ideas to things they already know - that is, associate them. The more facts that they can associate the new with, the better they will remember it.



MENTAL MATTERS CONT.

While familiarity usually aids memory, monotony can bury it. If someone does the same thing routinely, almost indistinguishable memories are just =overlaid on each other. If you eat the same thing every day, you'll probably forget any particular day. But you can easily remember striking novelties. As the old poem suggested, you'll never forget a purple cow.

Inactivity weakens memory. People who lack mental stimulation or social activity forget many things because they don't use them and so they lose them. If they are inactive, they have less reason to organize their thoughts, apply them, and associate them, all of which strengthen memory. If they don't discuss ideas, they also miss opportunities to reinforce the ideas in their memory.

Disorganized people are generally forgetful people. Since organization and structure connect memories into binding networks, disorganized thinkers are more likely to have random memories. They don't have related ideas that can remind them of what they have forgotten - they don't have any cues. Their minds are like overlapping of paper rather than filing cabinets. They usually don't have any systematic way of keep tracking of events or things, not realizing that simply making the effort to organize memories keeps ideas before their mind and makes them easier to recall.

Expectations can affect memory just as they can affect perceptions. Older people may forget things because they grow more pessimistic about their ability to remember and so don't focus their attention. They don't remember because they don't expect to remember. They are more likely to say they can't remember anymore, whereas younger people are more likely to blame memory failures on effort. But while older people don't do as well on timed tests of recall, they often do just as well on untimed tests. They simply take longer to retrieve facts from long term memory.

Stress, anxiety, and depression also impair memory by weakening motivation and attention. Stressed people can't relax long enough to let their memory search. Anxious people miss much

because they don't focus on anything outside themselves. Depressed people lose so much motivation that they sometimes can't perceive things much less remember them. They can't anticipate any pleasure in learning so they don't seriously try to remember. All of these emotional problems take a toll on memory.

Some psychologists believe that emotion is even more central to memory. They think that your mood is part of a memory. So you may not be able to remember something well until you get into the same mood that you were in when you first remembered it. This may explain déjà vu experiences. People may feel like they have been somewhere before even though they haven't because the new place arouses an emotional state stored somewhere in their memory. This would also explain why new experiences may trigger recall of superficially unrelated memories.

Memories might change over time. People may remember an event but forget and distort the details. If a person recounts an event over the years, they are more likely to retain it. Even so, they may fill in gaps with impressions. But some cognitive psychologists emphasize that this depends on how they store it in memory in the first place. They stress that meanings and not details go into memory.

Studies with amnesia victims suggest that memories, like paths or grooves, may fade or decay if not used. Patients with amnesia may perfectly remember older events but almost completely forget events of the last few years. As they recover their memories, they seem to remember the earlier events first and then the more recent ones. According to the decay theory, the older memories became more durable with use over the years, while the newer memories are not as well worn into the brain. Whether the memories have faded or merely become more difficult to retrieve is a bit of a guess though.

Forgetting, whether due to failures in retrieving, interference, distortion, decay, or emotions, is part of living. But by considering the possible causes, we can improve our memories. Psychologists have shown that while we may be inclined to forget, we are not destined to forget.

REGION 1 2005 VICE-CHAIRMEN CAMPAIGN LETTERS

As Region 1's representative to Mensa's national board of directors (the American Mensa Committee), I am asking that you allow me to continue the work which I began in 2003.

Since taking office I have constantly sought to make our region the best in governance, membership growth and group stability.

As an outspoken AMC member, I have striven to eliminate the layers of bureaucracy and obfuscation that have burdened the management of Mensa.

Being a Regional Vice Chair is more than just attending an RG; it is working months before with the planning committee, resolving problems, reviewing contracts, approving the application and acting as a liaison to the national staff should problems arise, as I have done.

It is strongly encouraging a group that has never done so to consider hosting a regional or national Mensa event, be it a RG, LDW, Colloquium or an AMC meeting, and providing ongoing support and resources, as I have done.

Effectively working as Region 1's RVC is more than using a bookstore's toll-free telephone number: it is reading and responding to the two to three dozen email messages received daily. 90% of all RVC and AMC communication is via email. 95% of AMC documents: forms, minutes, reports, etc. are delivered in digital format. Anyone who is unwilling to use a computer or unable to conduct business online cannot perform the duties of a RVC.

A RVC must be able to work well in a corporate board setting, with people who often have diverse ideas and business methodologies. My twenty years' board (corporate and non-profit) experience is invaluable.

A great sense of humour, stamina, and extraordinary attention to detail have stood me well in my term as your RVC. Please help me, with your vote, to make it another term!

Marghretta McBean, Region 1 Vice Chair
<http://region1.us.mensa.org/>
 American Mensa Ltd.

Some notes by your alternative candidate.

Hi ... I've met many of you at RGs and at the Leadership Workshop, etc.: but, many more of you are as yet un-met friends I can only reach via print. Our Region has about 6,500 members, so you can see it is not easy to meet each of you, at least in a short period of time.

Who am I and what am I doing here? I'm a motivated, dedicated, competent 25-year member, active on many levels during the past 14 years, hosting many events and dinners; currently also NH/ME vice-president and RG co-Chairman. (By the time you read this, many of you will know I can produce a large, fun RG.) Behind the scenes, I solve short and long-term problems, without delay, to help both sides gain fruitful resolution. I have also been a long-term Mensa philanthropist. I have written numerous published articles, bringing humor and (common?) sense to often prickly subjects.

Personally, I am a widower (but promise not to disappear if I meet 'the one'); and, have been a self-employed businessman since age 11, founding and owning a rare bookstore at the same location in Portsmouth, NH for the past 32 years, dealing with individuals, professionals, institutions in America and abroad. I am a person who shares Elvis' motto of "TCB" (Taking Care of Business - for decades, he wore a necklace with "TCB"). I often travel 500 to 1,000 miles for Mensa per month, expecting more travel if I am elected as your RVC1. I have reliable transportation, and have provided transportation for others as well.

I am attentive and even-tempered. It is easy to reach me day or night; and, I have a DEDICATED TOLL FREE PHONE FOR MENSA which is (877) 436-7250. I promise to bring insight, philosophy, humane humanism to all conduct and writings. And last, but not least, I promise NO recipes or sports. Please consider me for your VOTE in the April election (ballot and envelope will be in the April "Mensa Bulletin").

With Care,
 Walter Wakefield

CHAPTER NOTES

Southern Connecticut Mensa has an e-mail server list on Topica where members can discuss topics with other Mensans on the list To subscribe, just send a blank e-mail to:
MensaSCT- subscribe@topica.com

If you would like to organize or sponsor a Mensa event, please contact Jim Mizera at Jmizera@hotmail.com The event can be posted in the Chronicle and announced at monthly dinners It can also be listed in the newsletter of the Connecticut and Western Massachusetts Mensa chapter, the Media, if enough lead-time is available.

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