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Mensa Dates

- December 3, meeting at The Pines in Troy, AL
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DECEMBER MEETING IN TROY!

Be sure to mark your calendars for our next Mensa meeting on December 3rd at The Pines in Troy, AL. Troy was chosen as a location that is about as central as we could come up with for our far-flung group. Our webmaster, Brent Gourley, thoughtfully posted the message on our website with excellent directions... <http://www.montgomery-wiregrass.us.mensa.org/> and Facebook at Montgomery Wiregrass Mensa. Thank you, Brent!

November-December Mensa Dinner meeting:

- December 3rd at 6:00
- The Pines at 65 West Court Square in Troy (aka S. 3 Notch St.)

Directions:

- From US 231 go east on US 29 (aka Montgomery St.). Turn north (left) on 3 Notch St. (aka Hwy. 87).
- From Montgomery, cross the tracks, turn right after passing under the overpass; turn right again at the top of the ramp onto US 29.
- From the South, turn right off US 231 at either AL 87 (aka 3 Notch St.) Or US 29, then proceed as above.
- Be careful as a Google search turns up two other incorrect locations

Call Laurel Akin if you get lost at 334-300-2098. The number to the restaurant is 334-566-5382.

Terrible Puns on One!

- ~ A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blown Apart.
- ~ Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
- ~ A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW LOCAL SECRETARY - CHARLES HIGHTOWER

Charles at left at the October meeting with Les and Christiane



I was born in Montgomery, and have lived here ever since. My family attends Landmark Church of Christ, where I sing on the praise team. My wife of 27 years is the former Amy Wallace. Amy and I have 3 children: Charles Jr. is a student we hope will soon graduate from Troy Montgomery, Katelynn is a student at AUM, and Brandon is an 8th grader at Alabama Christian Academy.

My degrees - B.S. ('84) and MBA ('94) - are both from AUM. I teach Information Systems classes on occasion as an adjunct instructor for Faulkner University. My employer is General Dynamics Information Technology (GDIT), where I work as a database architect. I taught myself the Japanese language while traveling overseas for business, and I can likely conjugate sentences as well as a two-year-old Japanese child.

I have played the great highland bagpipes since the age of 15, and am Pipe Major of the Montgomery St. Andrew's Pipes and Drums. I have won competitions as a Grade III piper, which is about halfway up the scale toward professional. In the past I've played for a sitting Secretary of Defense, a former Postmaster General, and a Saudi Prince. Once I shared a dressing room with Roy Clark's band and then performed in the opening act for Stars Fell on Alabama. If you'll attend an AUM graduation exercise, you'll find me performing several times during the ceremony. In honor of our men and women in uniform, I have often played at police, state trooper, and fire department functions.

I write fiction for pleasure and competition, and have won several minor competitions. While I've not won any major competitions, I've received honorable mention from Writer's Digest and Writers of the Future. I serve as one of the administrators on the Internet Writing Workshop (IWW) Practice list. Each week one of the admins issues a writing exercise and challenges members to write a 400 word piece in response. Members not only submit their work, but also critique each other's writing. For several years, the IWW has been selected by Writer's Digest as one of the best 100 websites for writers.

As for family relations you might know of, the former Governor George C Wallace is a distant cousin of mine and is not related to my wife, despite her maiden name. Judge Hightower of Pike County is a closer kin - our fathers were first cousins.

I look forward to serving you in the capacity of local secretary, and will do my best to live up to the high standards Rodger has set.

Charles Hightower

FROM THE RVC - by Bob Cox

December, time for Mensa Holiday Parties. I hope you get to spend some time with your Mensa family.

The first renewal notices come out in December. Renewing early saves Mensa money with less mailing and printing costs. Consider getting a life membership. This is always a good deal and shows your commitment to Mensa. We are looking at the life dues calculations. We are currently using 1994 actuarial figures. People are living longer, so the latest figures will probably mean that we will recalculate life dues. My guess is that they will go up.

The Florida Pan Handle is not in our region, but we have sort of adopted Northwest Florida Mensa. Many of us attend their ValenTime Regional Gathering in Destin. The date for the up-coming one is February 10 -12. This is a great gathering with friendly people. The hotel is on the beach and the hospitality suite, ~~over~~ the pure white sand and emerald water of the Gulf. I regret that I won't be able to be there this year. Registration is \$50.00 through January 10. Contact John Mochan at 850-585-3194 or jmochan@cox.net.

The Carolinah RG will be May 18-20 in Greenville SC. If you have been before, you will be hearing from Mary Ann. If this will be your first time, call her at 864-963-2335 or e-mail maryacraig@juno.com and ask about the first timer discount. This is a popular RG with both younger and older members. I can promise you a great time.

Don't forget the daddy of them all, the Annual Gathering in Reno, Nevada, July 4 – 8. Registration is \$85.00 through the end of December. You can register on line at www.ag.us.mensa.org. An AG is the ultimate Mensa experience. This time there will be a Colloquium on Social and Video Gaming the day before the AG at the same hotel.

Thanks to all the proctors who tested during Mensa Brilliant. I have not received all the counts yet but I would like to recognize Memphis Mensa. Proctor Coordinator, David Shiffman and his proctors scheduled seven tests and tested 18 prospects. Great Work!

Holiday Gift Guide

Be of good cheer, friends! The American Mensa Holiday Gift Guide is ready at www.us.mensa.org/giftguide and waiting to help ease you through the thick of your holiday shopping. We sped around the World Wide Web and brought back a sleighful of items that could help make your holidays easier, smarter or just more fun. And, of course, we've included some ideas to help you give the gift of Mensa.

The Holiday Gift Guide is once again brought to you by the helpful folks at GEICO, who know a thing or two about saving time and money through your homeowner, vehicle and rental insurance -- and who offer special discounts to American Mensa members. Visit <http://www.us.mensa.org/geico> for more information.

The October meeting at the Asia Bistro in Montgomery we welcomed back old friends and met new ones!



Back row from left: Barbara Hoover, Kimberlee Chambers with her son Mensan Bryce Denovan, Christiane Robinson standing behind Destin Hoover, our new local secretary Charles Hightower, Lester Holmes,

Seated from left: David Hoover, Brent Gourley, Tim French, and Brandon Hightower.



Destin and Bryce mugging for the camera



Glad to have Bryce and his mom Kimberlee with us too!



Brandon Hightower's first time to join us. Thanks for coming, Brandon!

KUDOS

Our own Mensan, Tim French won the 2011 Robert Benchley Award for humor writing for his sketch, "The Old Man and the Leaf Blower."

The Award Ceremony will be in Washington, DC, November 12. Here's the link to the story:
<http://www.robertbenchley.org/competition/index> The Old Man and the Leaf Blower

Wiregrass Mensan Vanessa Robinson attends boarding school in northeast Georgia. Here is an excerpt from and the web address to her essay From Cyrus to Epica. Be sure to check it out!

From Cyrus to Epica -

Not all music is bland and lifeless. If the normal tunes start to grow dull and boring, there is always something more interesting on the opposite end of the spectrum. For people looking for a change in musical pace, symphonic metal has more depth than American pop because of its vocal quality, the instruments used, and the meaningful lyrics.

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.2&thid=133413ffc4b53d30&mt=application/pdf&url=https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui%3D2%26ik%3Dcc6b6a69d1%26view%3Datt%26th%3D133413ffc4b53d30%26attid%3D0.2%26disp%3Dsafe%26zw&sig=AHIEtbQHzsAbcBlDnOHPzN9SVsafHtHyiQ>

A Blog Is Afoot - Mensan Bill Sawatzki writes a monthly travel blog at bsawatzki.blogspot.com Read and comment if you would like.

Interested in having our own Mensa Chapter photo contest? Contact Barbara Hoover, at 423-364-9242. Give me a call if you're interested in setting this up or being involved.

Are you a Mind Gamer?

Attend the 2012 Mind Games event, hosted by Metropolitan Washington Mensa! Registration for this event is capped at 300 attendees, so plan now to join them April 20-22 in Herndon, Va. The best registration rate of \$85 is available only through Dec. 31; get more information and register online at www.mindgames.us.mensa.org.