

Armadillo Literary Gazette

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HAPPY



HOLIDAYS



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Please submit ads to the newsletter editor.

A Word to the Wise

-by John Neemidge, President

A Change of Seasons

Here it is — my final President's column of this two-year stint (and perhaps forever). I've really enjoyed being President the four years I've held the job, but it's high time that someone else move into the position. The group is in great shape going forward and I'm excited to see how it'll grow and prosper over the coming years. I'll still be heavily involved (as RG Chair and party host at least, and quite possibly more), and I'm looking forward to meeting even more of you.

In the 6 years since I first became LSM president, we've had an enormous amount of change. We've had 5 very successful LonestaRG's, and are on our way to a sixth. The group has grown tremendously; when I first started, our fiscal-year peak (at the end of March) was about 430 members. We had 463 members at the end of October 2003; I fully expect we'll reach 500 (a number we've never reached) before the fiscal year ends, and likely beyond. We have far more active members as well. When I first was getting involved with Lonestar Mensa, we used to joke that if you came to an event, you'd leave with an office. Most active members had a office of some kind. Now, we've got many active members who just enjoy attending events and participating. Over time, some of them may decide to take offices, but there's not the pressure there once was. Financially, we were in a very shaky situation just before I took office. We'd just changed printers and our newsletter production plan, and it wasn't clear just how much we could save. Today, we have a large cushion in the bank, enough that \$10,000 of group assets are in a CD earning interest. We have an earmarked scholarship fund that will carry us through 2004's scholarship and a chunk of 2005's. We're able to provide financial assistance to major group parties, and can afford to rent the Zilker Clubhouse for the Holiday Party. This has been accomplished by careful cost controls on the newsletter (though fortunately we no longer need to count our pennies when deciding to run extra pages — the money is there, if the content is), careful planning for events, and the profits from several very successful RG's. All of this means Lonestar Mensa is a better group all around: more members, more people to meet at events, better newsletter, more events, bigger events, and more budget to provide benefits to our members.

Everything that's been accomplished in this group has been a team effort. I've been privileged to work with some

great people over my years as President. Everyone I've worked with over the years deserves a big thank you. I've thanked ExComms, officers, volunteers, etc, from my other years in the December columns those years; to everyone I've thanked in previous years, thanks again. Here I want to thank the people who made 2003 a great year. Margaret Wofford did her usual excellent job, this year as Vice President. Midge Kocen kept our financials organized, worked with the bank for our CD, paid the bills, and generally took care of anything money-related. Geri Neemidge did a great job welcoming new members, preparing the Howdy To column and our birthday lists; she also arranged speakers for the monthly meeting and for LonestaRG V, hosted parties, did an enormous work on the LonestaRG V program, maintained our (Mensa-award nominated) website, and more. Janet and Mark Kres did a great job as Members At Large and LonestaRG Registrars. Helen Siders also did a great job, as Member At Large, as Circulation Manager and picnic coordinator, and as LonestaRG V Volunteer Coordinator. Rachael Stewart has maintained and improved the Armadillo Literary Gazette, keeping everyone up to date and informed about the group and getting new contributors involved. Paul Anderson continued his publicity efforts, keeping our Monthly Meetings in newspapers and other publications. Sam Waring handled the Testing Coordinator position, scheduling several testing sessions this year, registering test-takers, and working with new proctors to get them fully trained to administer tests themselves. Kartik Jayanarayanan was our Scholarship Coordinator for the 2002-2003 period. Michelle Vaughan continued as Gifted Children's Coordinator, and Steve Vaughan continued as SIGHT Coordinator. Fortunately, Kelly Wagner had nothing to do as Ombudsman and Arbiter, but made up for it with hosting Games Night and Potluck along with Steve Harsch. We added a new Georgetown Games Night hosted by Betty Dougherty. Jerry Lenamon continued as Waco Area Coordinator and Waco Get-Together host, and Jim Miller continued as Bryan/College Station Area Coordinator. We also had many people involved with LonestaRG V. I've already mentioned Geri Neemidge, Midge Kocen, and Janet and Mark Kres. Ray O'Connor kept us all very well fed, entertained, educated, and even performed a wedding. Paula Beard designed our logo. Barbara Bartlett created the White Elephant Bag Raffle. Thanks also to Hugh Brown, Johnny Zweig, Rick Jones, Paul Pierce, Kelly Wagner, Don Graves, and Betsy Skelly for their efforts during the RG.

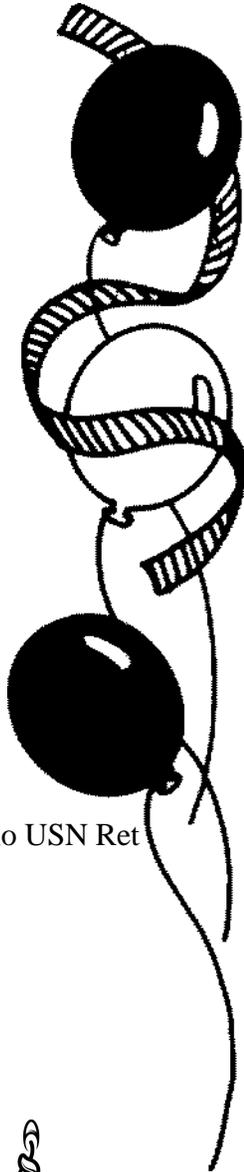
Undoubtedly I left someone out of that long list of people

to whom I'm indebted; if it's you, I apologize for the oversight — it's my goof, not your lack of effort. I'm very thankful for everyone who helped out over the past year (and over the past many years!).

That's it for this column and this term. All my best to Karen Werner, our incoming president, and may her term be filled with happiness, activity, and accomplishment!

Happy Birthday December

- 1 Dr John L Fike
Gregory Graves
- 3 Richard F Armstrong
- 4 Cara Walkup
- 5 Mr Wayne William Banks
Mr Arne Hartikka
Jeffery Lee Humphrey
- 6 Walter R Barksdale Jr
- 7 Michael Scheschuk
- 10 Mary Jane Lockhart
- 11 Jane M Kominek
- 12 Paul Heidenthal
Curtis Scroggins
- 13 Heather Hall
- 14 John Paliwoda
Ms Margaret Wofford
- 16 Shelley Sundermann
- 18 Gwendolyn Taylor
- 19 Ms Sue Ricket Caldwell
- 22 Eric Emmons
- 23 Fred G Deats III
- 24 LCDR Fred Grover Campillo USN Ret
- 25 Laura Christine Amos
- 26 Mr Michael Clinton Moyer
- 27 Cynthia Nelson
- 28 Sonya L Palmer
- 29 Mr Jack Vincent Musgrove
- 30 Merlin D Darling
Mary L Hoane



Howdy To!

-submitted by Geri Neemidge, Membership Chair

◆ Kathie Blair

Kathie is engaged and living with her fiance, Bill. They are a planning an underwater wedding but no date has been set yet. They have no children or pets. Kathie is an accountant in the immunization program at the Texas Department of Health.

Kathie's hobbies include scuba diving and photography - both above and under water. She also enjoys travelling, usually to Florida, Bahamas or various Caribbean destinations. Bonaire is her favorite, and she will visit there again over the Christmas holidays. She plans to visit Hawaii in January and just got back from Aruba. Kathie enjoys finding the best deals and the best ways to get more frequent flier miles at the same time. She also enjoys singing and sings every chance she gets - Church, karaoke, the car, etc.

Kathie is very politically active and aware. She volunteers on campaigns from the local through national level, she is the historian and yearbook editor in a women's political group and participates on both local and state levels of the organization, and she is the newsletter editor and soon to be webmaster for the co-ed group that she and Bill belong to together.

Kathie also enjoys building computers and helping others with hardware and/or software questions. She has been an avid programer and enjoys coding html. She likes playing games on her computer, especially simulation games. She also enjoys games on her Xbox and palm pilot!

Kathie decided to join Mensa because she thought it might be a place to meet interesting people and broaden her horizons.

◆ Michael J. D'Amelio

Michael is a patent and trademark attorney who recently set up his own practice after many years in law firms and corporations. He lives in Salado with his three dogs — all Hungarian Vizslas. Michael is single and has no children. He grew up outside of Boston and has been in Texas for about 6 years. Michael exercises regularly, and when the weather cooperates he likes to get out and bike or hike. He joined Mensa to meet new people, make new friends, and get involved more in the community.

November ExComm Meeting Minutes

-submitted by Margaret Wofford, Vice President

November 8, 2003

Attending: John Neemidge, President; Margaret Wofford, Vice President; Midge Kocen, Treasurer; and Geri Neemidge, Membership Chair.

John convened the meeting at 10:30.

Midge presented the financial statements and revised RG accounting. Attendees reviewed the statements. The \$10,000 CD paid \$156 interest when it matured on October 15, 2003 and Midge renewed it for a seven month term. The renewal interest rate was not conducive to breaking the CD into smaller denominations with staggered maturity dates.

Attendees discussed the slate of candidates to be elected in November and serve in 2004. John reviewed the bylaws and ascertained that votes must be submitted by the November monthly meeting or by November 15, whichever is later.

Geri reported that the use of PayPal has been arranged for the holiday party reservations. Attendees agreed to charge for children ages five and older.

John adjourned the meeting at 10:50.

Respectfully Submitted, Margaret Wofford Vice President



Corner(Ed)!

-by Rachael Stewart, Editor

Don't you all pine away folks, the year is fir from over. Just think of all the excitement that awaits you - you need to spruce up the house for visiting relatives, eat until hemlock sounds like a good idea, and then holly out the garbage bag full of ripped-up wrapping paper.



Can a football field-goal kicker be called a missile-toe?

Perhaps we should take cooking lessons from Yule-ia Child. Does she has a special cable Pie-per-View show in honor of the seasoning?

If you can, I suggest Present Bush would like a gumdrop on al-Quaeda.

And don't forget to dip your dogs, lest they wish you a Fleas Navidad!

LSM Election Report

-by Walter Stewart, Nominating and Election Committee Chair

As chairman of the Nominating and Election Committee, I am reporting on the local chapter election. The Committee membership is as follows: Kartik Jayanarayanan, Jacob Mathews, and myself as chair.

I volunteered for this position in response to an email from John Neemidge on 12 Oct 2003.

Contrary to the naming of the committee, the candidate list was presented to me at the time I volunteered. No input was given to me by any committee member re the slate of candidates, nor did I play any part in selecting the candidates. So, as far as I'm concerned we were an election committee, not a nominating committee. I have no idea who came up with the slate or when it was determined. A suggestion for the new president-elect: appoint the next 'committee' upon taking office!

Over the last two weeks I have received votes from members. In all, 6 paper ballots and four electronic ballots were cast. In other words, only about 2% of the membership even bothered to vote. Or to put it another way: if you assume the people running voted, only four other members did. Or less than 1% of the chapter membership. Think of it: if any ten members would have conducted a write in campaign, they could have won! Of course, getting ten Mensa members to agree on anything can be problematic...

The results are as follows:

For President: Karen Werner – 10 votes

For VP: Margaret Wofford – 10 votes

For Treasurer: Kathie Blair – 10 votes

For Members at Large:

Janet Kres – 10 votes

Mark Kres – 10 votes

Helen Siders – 9 votes

There were no write-in candidates for any position.



Reality Blinked

-by Jane Thompson



Earl Thompson

My uncle Earl was one of those people who are larger than life. When he strode into a room, he dominated it, no matter how many others were there. He was always the center of attention, even if he was only quietly listening. He exuded charm and charisma; it was impossible to resist him.

Earl was born with the century, my grandmother's first son. If you pick up an Oklahoma University yearbook for the early 1920s you see his picture all through it; for some reason he was known as "Yoni," the football superstar. When I attended school there some forty years later a few of my professors still remembered hearing of him. His college roommate was later elected Senator; when Yoni died, the Senator dropped everything in Washington and flew to Oklahoma City to serve as pallbearer at the funeral. It had to be in Oklahoma City, for there wasn't a church big enough in Earl's town to hold the mourners.

Earl inherited his charm from his father and also his father's alcoholism; from his mother, he was dealt the strength of character to beat his drinking problem long before it was considered a disease. Yoni just quit drinking through sheer force of will. He wrote his mother—my grandmother—daily, and visited her once a week. You couldn't help but know when Earl hit the door and bounded up the stairs two at a time to see his "little mother." Grandma lit up like a Christmas tree when he visited and the kids gathered around to hear his stories

and his booming laugh.

During the war, Earl served in Italy and France and Germany with the 45th Division. It's well-known that war can bind men closer than any blood relationship; like so many others, Yoni and his buddy dreamed of returning to peaceful Oklahoma and starting a business together. Unlike others, though, Yoni turned dreams into plans and hammered the plans into reality. After the war, he and his army buddy settled in tiny Prague, Oklahoma. They built a service station—Yoni ran the station and served the customers while the buddy did the mechanic work. They married and started raising families and built houses next door to each other. They remained closer than most brothers. Their business prospered, and of course, Yoni became a pillar of the community. Like so many men who saw so much during the war, they remained satisfied and happy with their quiet, backwater lives.

In 1954, when I was just a little girl and medical science was in its infancy when it came to cancer research, Yoni's buddy was diagnosed with leukemia. Nothing to be done. Terminal. It was long and very, very hard. Took over a year. At the end, only Yoni and his buddy's wife could bear to even go into the hospital room. Yoni broke all the rules and gave more blood than he ever should have and buttonholed all his friends in Prague, Oklahoma City, and the rest of the state for more blood. Of course, to no avail. Yoni's friend died a pauper, having spent all the money he had saved from the business for his children's education and for his old age on palliative medical care. His wife was left with only enough to bury him. Yoni had lost his right arm. But, of course, you don't have any other choice but to go on. Yoni hired a mechanic, bought out the widow, did what he could for the kids and hoped for a better future.

Then, a few months later, Yoni started feeling poorly. And suspicious. He didn't say anything to anyone—just quietly went in for some blood tests. He got the results back on December 26, 1955. Leukemia. The same kind that killed his buddy. The doctors were baffled—had Yoni given too much blood? Was that type of leukemia, perhaps, contagious? Did he and his buddy run into some mysterious toxin during the war? What could possibly cause two healthy men to die of the same disease within a year of each other? Now it is known that the type of leukemia that killed Yoni and his partner is triggered by petroleum distillates but, at that time, it was a fearful mystery.

Yoni thought about the future and what it held for himself

and his family. He stared at reality and reality blinked.

Earl went to the University of Oklahoma Medical School and presented himself to the cancer researchers. He explained his situation and stated that he was well aware of what was to come. He rejected a passive role. He volunteered himself as a research subject. He asked them if there was anything, anything at all that they would like to know about leukemia. He would be glad to help—on two conditions. Those were that they not charge him for his care and that no effort be made to keep him alive.

One of the researchers had long wanted to know how cancer cells would react to radiation but knew what would happen to a subject who was irradiated, so had not been able to try the experiment. Earl volunteered to deliver a radiation source to the cancerous cells to study the effect of radiation on leukemia. Of course, it took a while to convince them that he was serious and he had to sign a ream of releases, but he got them to agree to his plan. Earl could talk anybody into anything.

He had to convince his wife and children; again, though, he prevailed. I have a clear memory of his talk with his mother and how brave she was when he said goodbye; she knew she would never see him again. He forbade her to visit him in the hospital. He knew how bad it was going to be. She didn't cry until his foot hit the front porch.

He checked himself into University Hospital in January, 1956. After an incredible battery of tests, one afternoon the researcher mixed a highball for himself and an "atomic cocktail" for Earl—a drink made with radioactive cobalt. Later the doctor shook his head in disbelief when he described how Earl discussed OU's football prospects as he quietly sipped his drink.

Of course, it was horrible. Earl died of radiation sickness, but it only took five days. Somewhere there's a study of what happens to leukemic cells when radiation is delivered through the stomach to the bloodstream. God knows if it did any good in the scheme of cancer research, but it gave Yoni some control over his fate and made him feel that he was contributing.

I was only a little girl when he died; his was the first death I experienced. He taught me more about life and death than anyone else ever likely will. Earl was larger than life and even bigger than death.

Herein Monsters Lie (Part III)

-by Brian Patrick Cocoran, copyright 2002

"Males, Laddie, that's a pack of hungry males. And not one of them larger than 600 pounds.", Mabry exclaimed excitedly. "That means there's a big female nearby. She'll be hungry too. You watch that bait of yours. I'll keep my fingers crossed that she takes your bait and not one of them. You count to ten and by the time you get there I'll guarantee you that you're going to have the fight of your life on your hands."

Count to "ten" he said. I got as far as "six" when I could see, as if played upon a motion picture screen directly in front of me, a monstrous Black Marlin had launched itself like a torpedo directly out of the side of the swell, having snatched the bait in the path of its trajectory. It crashed onto the water's surface below in the trough of the swell and thrashed about wildly, churning it in indiscriminate violence before vanishing beneath the foam and froth.

When I turned to Captain Mabry, his eyes told me everything I needed to know. "The mother ship has landed. That's the biggest bitch I've ever seen", he said. "You wanted your world's record. She's it."

The line on the great Penn reel began to free spool away at a dizzying rate of speed. I had all I could do to maintain enough thumb pressure on the reel to prevent a fatal backlash. To my right Captain Mabry was winding feverishly at his reel to get the teaser lure on board before the great beast could cross the two lines. This was a precarious moment. The great billfish was running with the bait but had not swallowed it and was not solidly hooked. If I applied too much pressure on the spinning barrel of the reel just now, the fish would spook and reject the bait. If I applied too little, the line would foul in the barrel rendering it impossible to reel it in. It was necessary to apply just sufficient pressure to control any inkling of a disastrous backlash.

"Feed it too her like a gumdrop" the Captain exhorted me, his face flushed from the effort of having reeled in 100 yards of line in lightning speed. "When she's made her run and settled down we'll set the hook and strap you down. Give her a chance to swallow it good."

No sooner had the Captain spoken these words when the frantic whizzing of the reel subsided to a slow and steady stream of clicks. "Now's the time, Laddie. Pick up the rod and set yourself in the chair."

I removed the rod from the covering-board and carried it

to the game chair inserting the butt of the stout rod into the holder. Seating myself in the chair, the Captain's two burly arms reached around me and snapped the leather harness tight about my waist and chest with a definitive metallic snap. Without releasing his arms from the harness he leaned in close to my ear and told me in a clear and simple cadence, "That monster is at least twenty feet long and weighs 2000 pounds. She's ten times your size Laddie. You're the David here and she is Goliath reincarnate. Now we're in her backyard Laddie, not ours. Creatures of that enormous size and power always have the odds on their side. On your side, you've got the best boat, the best equipment and the best crew of men that can be had anywhere on God's blue earth. Now it's going to be us against her, and the winner takes all. So brace yourself, Laddie. You're about to dance with the Devil."

With that the Captain turned to Quint on the flying bridge and pumped his arm in a gesture of preparedness. Quint stood ready at the throttle.

"Throw the drag lever into the strike position and brace yourself backwards against the tackle", Mabry ordered. I pitched the bail of the enormous reel into the locking position and felt a slight tug on the line. Mabry turned and pumped his arm into a circular pattern ordering Quint to gun the boat's twin motors. A tremendous roar ensued and the seat of the game chair dropped beneath me like a descending elevator as the bow pitched upward with the boat's forward momentum. As I stared wide-eyed into the foment of propeller wash the line tightened. The long, stiff rod started to bend in a perfect arc and the line started to play out against the drag. Almost immediately Quint cut the motors to idle speed and the Argonaut settled back, rocking aimlessly between the swells. The total distance traveled could not have exceeded 50 feet.

"Now your hooked up solid, Laddie." snorted the Captain, "I hope you had your Wheaties Yank, 'cause you're not going anywhere for the next six or eight hours". It was apparent that the Captain's sense of humor had returned.

The giant billfish reacted to the sting of the hook with a predictable animus. The mighty beast started an inexorable rush to put as much distance between itself and the source of its distress as its formidable energy could mount. My reel screamed in mechanical agony as yard after yard of 130 pound test peeled off the barrel as if attached to a locomotive. Sensing that the monster might run out all the line and win the game early, Mabry ordered Quint to put the Argonaut in reverse gear and chase the beast backward to take up some of the lost line. This game

went on for an hour and a half with the tethered she-devil executing a multitude of magnificent writhing skyward leaps, peeling, chasing and losing more line. It was a standoff up till then. But still there were 500 yards of line between us and the great beast. We had gained not a yard on her since her initial forceful run.

Then something unusual occurred that told us the beast had taken an all-together different tack. The angle of the line to the water became steeper and steeper as she took to the far depths beneath us. This puzzled the Captain greatly who had never known a hooked Marlin to do anything but fight it out to the finish at the surface. When the line went almost straight down and the great beast lay directly beneath us, Mabry ordered Quint to disengage the propellers and leave the motors to idle. Almost immediately the line went dead slack and the curve of the rod went straight as an arrow.

"Take up that slack, Laddie.", he stormed at me angrily. "If she crash hits the line she could snap it clean. Rule number one of any kind of fishing is to always keep the line taught."

I didn't need to be told these basic facts of fishing and I fumed in silent anger at the Captain for standing in willful ignorance of the fact that at the very moment of his comment I was feverishly engaged in an unsuccessful attempt at winding in the dreaded slack.

I watched him closely as he peered over the edge of the boat to study the water. I could sense the fear building up in him. He seemed plagued by indecision as he nervously rubbed the gristle of his beard. "What the deuces is that beast up to?", I heard him mumble under his breath as he stepped back from the gunwales never removing his eyes from the water. "She wouldn't be doin' that now, would she?" I heard him ask himself. It was almost as though he had a premonition of what was about to occur. I can only say with absolute certainty that it took me by total surprise.

In one startling fraction of an instant the mighty fish ascended scant feet from the very spot Mabry had been studying and fired itself straight up into the noonday sun like a missile launched from a submarine. As the full length of its muscular body quivered above us the backwash of its ascent drenched the fighting cockpit in a torrent of salty brine. But before our fascination with this awesome spectacle could give way to fear the monster came crashing down and met its shadow crosswise onto the deck behind me with such a thunderous thud as to send a violent shudder across the entire craft. To my absolute horror, I

pivoted in the game chair to discover that the giant beast had fallen directly upon the Captain himself, crushing him against the two port-mounted barrels of gasoline. They both stood ruptured, gushing raw fuel across the deck. The terribly awkward twist of his neck admitted of no possibility but that it had been fatally snapped.

The great beast, meanwhile, found a life of its own in the fighting cockpit of the Argonaut. Imagine if you will a twenty-foot-long predatory monster stretched across the back of a twelve-foot-wide boat. Imagine the beast to be in torment, confused and angry at being in a hostile environment, raging at her adversaries and bent upon their destruction. It was a captivating, fascinating horror to watch, and ever-so-briefly I was mesmerized by the spectacle until the peril of my predicament dawned upon my conscious awareness.

The great beast thrashed insanely about the deck in its violent attempt to return to the sea, smashing to smithereens everything in its vicinity. Its mammoth head protruded over the side of the boat, its lifeless doll's eyes scant feet above the water line. The bulk of its muscular body flailed savagely, trapped between the cabin entrance and the live bait tanks on either side of the boat. Despite the enormous power she possessed and in spite of her inexorable will, the creature simply could not jockey into a position that would enable her to launch herself to sea. For me, trapped between the beast and the cover board of the stern, with only the sturdy mount of the game chair to insulate me against her savage blows, it was like being locked in a closet with a raging bull. I had nowhere to hide and risked the Captain's fate while this frantic beast flailed away with merciless, unrelenting violence.

I had resolved that I would fling myself over the side and cling to the cover board of the craft until this unpredictable drama played itself to a finish, with the giant fish either effecting its escape or dying on the deck. I had half a leg over the side when I was halted in my progress by the distinct sound of a mechanical ratcheting followed by an ear-splitting blast. There, up on the flying bridge stood Quint, the smoking barrel of a twelve gauge pump pointing directly toward the she-devil. He ejected the smoking cartridge and fired another slug into the monster's head, the weapon's recoil wrenching his shoulder backward. The wounded beast responded in turn by quadrupling the ferocity of its flailing, smashing the cabin entrance to splinters and sheering the game chair off its steel mooring sending it flying with the velocity of a cannonball inches from my head.

The death throes of the beast were horrifying to watch. Another blast issued from the bridge. Quint fired again and again and again. It was the last shot that proved lucky. It penetrated the great fish in the softer flesh behind the bony carapace of its skull and severed her spinal cord. While her gaping gill slits still flashed and quivered and her lifeless doll's eyes rolled, it was as though someone had turned off the creature's lights as the full length of its body collapsed limp as a wet dish rag. It now lay silent and motionless across the full width of the Argonaut's stern.

With smoke still pouring from the breach, Quint returned the shotgun to its scabbard on the bridge and stood, panting heavily, studying half in horror, half in relief, the now-still creature beneath him. Satisfied the beast posed no further threat, he cautiously descended the ladder to the deck. He then discovered the hapless Captain, his neck snapped cleanly, lying dead along side the vanquished trophy.

He fell to his knees in front of Captain Mabry's body, his back arched in a bow, arms extended, face to the sky, eyes closed. His face was contorted into a grimace of unspeakable agony as the muscles of his stomach convulsed against the need to expiate his grief by crying aloud. Prepared as he was to celebrate this grand victory with his friend and mentor, he could not reconcile himself that the great beast had brought this battle to a tragic draw.

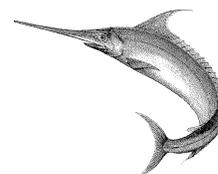
I hurdled over the body of the great dead beast to join him on his knees. With the Captain's body between us, I seized both his wrists and shook him.

"He'd dead, Quint. Let it go.", I told him in a commanding voice as I could muster.

Never opening his eyes, he pulled against my grasp but I would not let him loose. "Let it go." I commanded him with even greater authority.

His chest heaved spasmodically with greater and greater volume until it reached a crescendo. He collapsed in sobs on the captain's chest. I was only half glad that, so preoccupied, he could not see the tears that had welled up in my own eyes and coursed their way down my own face.

(To be continued in January. --Editor)



Hello Region 6!

-by Dan Wilterding, RVC Region 6

Have you sent in your proxy yet? You should have seen one as an insert in the November Bulletin, they're also available online at the AML website (<http://www.us.mensa.org> — click on PROXYQUEST and follow the links). This effort requires a greater percentage of member participation than anything else American Mensa has done in the last 30 years: we must have in excess of 50% involvement or we'll have to do it over again. Having an initial budget of \$20,000 this is quite a chunk of change — I can think of many better ways to spend our money, can't you? Please submit your proxy and encourage others to do the same.

The end of the Mensa Foundation (MERF) Scholarship season is nigh (December 31), how are the local submissions coming along? These scholarships are available to members of Mensa as well as non-members. Application forms are available on the web (<http://merf.us.mensa.org/scholarships/zipfinder.php>), please encourage college/university students (and soon-to-be students) in your area to apply. You could then volunteer to read the submitted essays and experience a feeling of great reward by participating in the process of giving a helping hand to deserving others.

Comments, anyone?

Dan Wilterding - RVC6

rvc6@us.mensa.org

dtwtech@swbell.net

817-573-4454 (before 9 P.M.)

504 West Atchley Drive

Granbury, Texas 76048



Don't forget:

NORGY VI — New Orleans Regional Gathering, y'all

At the Maison Dupuy Hotel (in the French quarter)

December 12-14

-- This is also a chance to look in on an AMC meeting

Co-hosted by New Orleans and Baton Rouge Mensas

Contact:

Online -- <http://www.norgy.us.mensa.org>

USPS -- NORGY

c/o Baton Rouge Mensa

PO Box 77513

Baton Rouge, LA 70879-7513

Sign Up Now for the Lonestar Mensa Holiday Party

Send in your reservations now for the LSM Holiday Party! This year's party will be held at the Zilker Clubhouse (the same location as last year) on Sunday December 7th at 2:00pm. The Clubhouse is west of Zilker Park in the hills. It has a panoramic view of downtown Austin and two beautiful fireplaces.

There will be a \$6.00 admission charge (if you pay in advance) and a \$7.50 charge at the door. The group will be providing finger foods and desserts, cider, eggnog, and soft drinks. You should BYOB. To sign up in advance, send a check to our treasurer, Midge Kocen, 7131 Wood Hollow Drive Apt. 247, Austin, TX, 78731-2502, or go to the LSM website Holiday Party page (<http://lsm.us.mensa.org/hpreg.htm>) and pay via PayPal. If you're signing up by mail, send your payment by December 1st so it'll have time to make it through the mail; we'll accept PayPal payments through the 6th. It will greatly help in our planning if you sign up early, as it helps us estimate how many people will attend and therefore how much food we should purchase.

We'd appreciate volunteers to help set up decorations for the party and to help with food preparation during the party. We'd also like to get together a group of member musicians to play holiday music during the party — if you're a musician, please contact John Neemidge to join the group.

We hope to see you at this special Holiday Party!



Holiday Party Gift Exchange

As we have the past three years, we'll be holding a white elephant gift exchange at the LSM Holiday Party. Each person participating should bring a wrapped gift of nominal value. Used items are perfectly welcome, as long as they're in reasonable condition. Each person participating in the exchange will draw a number, and will pick in that order. As you are called to pick, you may either take a wrapped gift and open it, or steal someone else's gift. If your gift is stolen, you may pick a new wrapped gift, or you may steal from someone else (however, you may not steal back the item just stolen from you). Each gift may be stolen twice; after that it can't be stolen again. It's been lots of fun the past two years — we hope everyone will participate! The more, the merrier!

What's Happening in December

Thank Goodness It's Thursday

Central Market Café

Every Thursday

6:00-8:00pm

4001 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin

(512) 206-1020

Meet us in the Café after work for fun, conversation & food. Prospective members welcome. Central Market Café is located in the Central Park shopping center on the east side of Lamar Blvd between 38th and 41st Streets. Central Market is the anchor store. Central Market Café is adjacent to Central Market on the south side. We meet upstairs.

LSM Holiday Party

Sunday, December 7

2:00pm

Zilker Clubhouse

See the facing column for details.

Directions:

MoPac Southbound: Exit Bee Caves Road / RM 2244. Proceed to the intersection and u-turn under MoPac. Stay on the access road. Take the first left onto Rollingwood Drive; you'll go under MoPac. Take the first right onto Zilker Clubhouse Road. The Clubhouse is at the top of the hill.

MoPac Northbound: Exit Bee Caves Road / RM 2244. Go straight through the light. Take the first left onto Rollingwood Drive; you'll go under MoPac. Take the first right onto Zilker Clubhouse Road. The Clubhouse is at the top of the hill.

ExComm Meeting

Saturday, December 13

10:00am

University Hills Branch

4721 Loyola Lane, Austin

Contact John Neemidge at (512) 310-7863 to get an item on the agenda. All members welcome.

Take 183 to Manor Rd. exit; go west on Manor Road past the HEB; turn left at the next light, which is Loyola. The library is on the right, less than one block up Loyola.

Monthly Meeting

Saturday, December 13

11:00am-1:00pm

Austin Public Library

University Hills Branch

4721 Loyola Lane, Austin

Please see the announcement on page 5 for meeting details. Take 183 to Manor Rd. exit; go west on Manor Road past the HEB; turn left at the next light, which is Loyola. The library is on the right, less than one block up Loyola.

Waco Area Mensa Get-Together

Wednesday, December 17

7:00pm

Barnes & Noble Café

4909 W. Waco Dr., Waco

Prospective members welcome. RSVP to Jerry Lenamon, (254) 399-9450.

Fold & Sticker

Thursday, December 18

(at TGIT)

Help us assemble the newsletter! See Thank Goodness It's Thursday for directions.

Potluck SIG & Games Night

Saturday, December 20

6:00pm

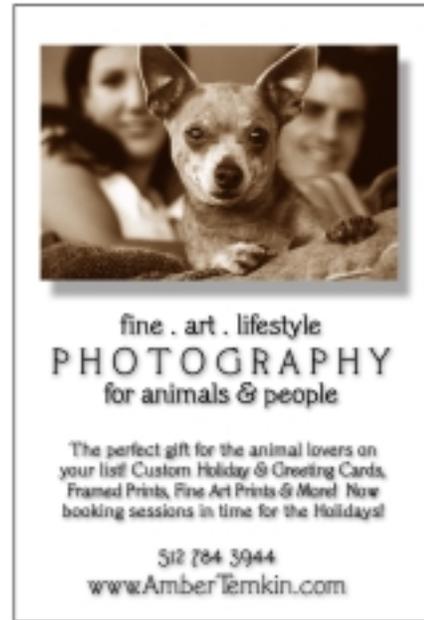
Kelly Wagner & Steve Harsch's Home

1001 E. Riverside, Austin

(512) 443-9650

Theme: Middle Eastern food. If you also have a holiday treat you'd like to bring, please do! Please RSVP.

Directions from Riverside Dr between IH35 & Congress Ave: the house is on the SE corner of the intersection of Travis Heights Blvd & Riverside Dr. There is a traffic light at the intersection. Park on Travis Heights & enter the house at the back door. Do not attempt to park on Riverside Dr.



Mensan Realtor

Austin area. Free referrals to other areas.

Shelley Sundermann

JB Goodwin Company

(512) 913-3108 (800) 900-9115

shelley@jbgoodwin.com



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SingleMingleAustin.com; (512)589-3159

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 TGIT	5	6
7 Holiday Party	8	9	10	11 TGIT	12	13 ExComm & Monthly Meetings
14	15	16	17 Waco Area Mensa	18 TGIT <i>Fold & Sticker</i>	19	20 Potluck SIG & Games Night
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	Happy New Year!		

2003

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