

Armadillo Literary Gazette

A Publication of Lonestar Mensa

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March 2004



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Commerical: Business card sized (2" x 3") ads are \$10 for one month, \$25 for three months, and \$40 for six months. Publication may be delayed due to space considerations. Ads must be camera-ready, and should be submitted electronically if at all possible. We reserve the right to edit for content if necessary. Rates for other sized ads or other time periods are available upon request. The deadline for ad submission is 5 days before the general newsletter deadline.

Please submit ads to the newsletter editor.

A Word to the Wise

The day I am writing this column is the day after our “big freeze” of 2004, with some white stuff powdering the lawn. Seeing television images of people trying to slide down hills on cardboard made me smile. When I was barely a teenager, we had a snowstorm in Michigan that left eight feet of snow (no, not drifts) on the roads and yard. I could open my bedroom window, and slide down a snow hill. We couldn’t get out our front door because of drifts; luckily, the wind was blowing from that side, so we had no problem exiting through the back door. School was closed for three weeks, in a place where snow was commonplace and school closings were rare. Several times after I left Michigan, I visited my mom during winter, and marveled that the road to our home consisted of one lane only, the other lane being a snow drift 15 feet high. I love Texas (Austin, anyway).

This month marks the first time I have hosted a Lonestar Mensa party at my house, even though I have been active locally since 1997. (This is my third year [not consecutively] on the Executive Committee.) On Saturday, March 20, I will be hosting a Spring Celebration Party at my house, combination crawfish boil and potluck. A detailed announcement appears on a subsequent page in this newsletter.

March’s Monthly Meeting occurs on March 8, the evening before the Texas primary elections. Our speaker will be from the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, speaking on the topic of marriage equality. We had a lively group and question and answer/discussion period at last month’s meeting featuring a volunteer from the Texas Campaign for the Environment. We had larger attendance than in recent months, despite the downpour that evening. I hope this will continue in our current location, the North Village Library branch at 2139 W. Anderson Lane.

There have also been increasing numbers of members showing up for TGIT, held every Thursday at Central Market. Usually, at least one person new to Austin or Mensa shows up. If you never go, why not?

I also hope all of you are registered to vote. Like most well-informed citizens, I have certain principles I cling to when voting. I don’t care what yours are, as long as you vote. Voting makes America great, because people really can make a difference, if they just become informed and vote their principles.

Last month’s speaker homed in on a truism, and repeated it often. Sometimes (maybe most times) in this country,

things only happen when people let their wishes be known to their elected representatives. There is strength in numbers, especially when the numbers are vocal. If you have a cause, get involved. If you feel strongly about something, let your elected representatives know by phone or by fax or by snail mail. They listen; in fact, they listen to that more than they listen to money, because election outcomes depend on voter numbers, period.

I hope to see you sometime this month, either at TGIT, the Monthly Meeting, or at the Spring Celebration Party. And remember, summer is just around the corner.

March Birthdays!

- 2 Mrs Joanna J Newnam
- Devin Vitone
- 4 Lynda Boots
- Adawna DeVine
- 5 Mr David B Miller
- 6 Ms Mary Dunlap You
- 8 Michael D’Amelio
- Jacob Matthews
- Jane Thompson
- 10 Joshua Benjamin Ch
- 11 Marcy Goodfleisch
- 12 Mr William K McKoy
- 13 Charles Graham Cruthirds
- 14 Eric J Hammack
- Joseph Santandrea
- 15 Henry Arthur Powell
- Terry Rodgers
- 17 Mark Andy Smith
- 18 Charles L Fahy Jr
- Ms Marilyn Gardner Ford
- G David Higginson
- Lance S Kinney
- 19 Kyle Simpson
- 20 Mr Paul Anderson
- Jason Cezeaux
- 21 Jon Etkins
- Melanie Martin
- 22 Judi Buonaguidi
- Amy M Feller
- Ken A Finn
- 23 Ashley Wollscheid
- 24 Ms Lydia Ann O’Neil
- 25 Ms Trudy L K Loper
- 27 Madeleine Z Mercier
- 29 Joe Hinder
- Ronald Massey
- 30 Cheryl L Kane
- Elizabeth Pugliese
- 31 Kathy Ann Sheley PhD



Test The Nation 2

Last June, thousands of people across the country tested their intelligence during the two-hour FOX special, Test the Nation. The show was so successful that FOX has scheduled Test the Nation 2 to air on Friday, March 5. About 25 Lonestar Mensans got together to watch the first test, and we all had a great time, so we're doing it again for the sequel! We're getting together on the 5th at 6:30 at Legends Sports Bar at the Holiday Inn Northwest. Bring your friends if you can — hopefully they'll do well on the test and go on to join us! If they can't join us, encourage them to watch the show and take the test. If you want to set your VCRs too, the actual broadcast runs from 7-9pm. The Holiday Inn Northwest is located at the southwest corner of Mopac (Loop 1) and US 182 (Research Blvd) in Austin. To get there, the easiest thing to do is take 183 to the Loop 360/Capitol of Texas Hwy exit (just west of Mopac), exit there, u-turn over 183, and turn onto the 183 frontage road eastbound. You'll see the Holiday Inn on your right just as the road bends. Turn right on Tallwood and right again on Business Park Drive. Legends Sports Bar is at the back of the hotel, on your right. The hotel can be a bit tricky to find, so if you have questions, see the directions section of the hotel's web page at www.hotelaustin.com or call 512-343-0888 and ask for directions.

Spring Celebration

This year's spring party will be a combination crawfish boil/potluck at Karen Werner's home in South Austin. The crawfish boil will include all the fixin's: crawfish, corn, potatoes, and mushrooms (and bread on the side). For the timid, we are also having a potluck. A grill will be available for grilling. If you wish, please feel free to RSVP, so that I know how many pounds of crawfish to buy and what to cook/prepare for the potluck. Soft drinks will be provided. Otherwise, BYOB.

Directions:

From I-35, go south and exit on Slaughter Lane, Exit 227. Go west (right) on Slaughter for 3.0 miles to the first stoplight past McDonald's. This is Curlew Drive. There is a park on the right, but no street sign to tell you the street name. Turn right at the stoplight and go approximately 0.5 miles, just past Wilcrest. 9110 Curlew Drive is a stone façade house with pink trim on the left.

From MoPac, go south to Slaughter Lane and turn left (east) at the stop light. The fourth stoplight (the first light past Brodie Lane and just past the signs for Tanglewood Forest) is Curlew Drive (unmarked)). Turn left on Curlew Drive and travel 0.5 miles, just past Wilcrest. 9110 Curlew Drive is a stone façade house with pink trim on the left.

Hello Region 6!

-by Dan Wilterding, RVC Region 6

Springtime! The leaves are greening, the dandelions need mowing, and for the vast majority of us it's time to renew our membership. Please — don't forget to do that before the 31st.

ProxyQuest is coming along nicely -- we've gathered all of the easy pickings and have begun the push to persuade those that have not yet sent theirs in. If you have questions or concerns about this please contact me or your local group leaders for more information. This matter really does need to be put to rest so that we may spend our dues monies in ways more beneficial to us all; current expenditures for ProxyQuest are expected to be in excess of \$50,000 before the end of March and nearly \$14,000 more before July 1. Proxies may be submitted online at <https://secure.us.mensa.org/proxy/> or on paper (ask your LocSec).

Are you interested in being the Region6 LDW Coordinator? It's a typical Mensa job — lots of work, some glory (very loosely defined), no money but the potential for intense personal satisfaction. If interested please call or write me (contact info below).

Comments, anyone?

Dan Wilterding - RVC6

rv6@us.mensa.org

dtwtech@swbell.net

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

504 West Atchley Drive

Granbury, Texas 76048

Coming soon to a Houston near you:

SynRG: Swingin' Soiree

May 28-31 2004

You're invited to a special party for special people. It's classy. It's fun. Maybe naughty; definitely nice. A magical weekend where anything can happen. Created by the same team that produced the '96 AG: Black Gold Blowout. Indulge yourself!

<http://www.gcmensa.com>

contact: Pat Spence, 10650 S.W. Plaza Court #41

Houston, Texas 77074

... and in Dallas:

Feast of Pleasures and Delights XXV

November 25-28 2004

\$25 until May 31, then \$50 till August 31, \$55 after

Contact: Carol Hilson, 9413 Shipman St, Rowlett, Texas 75088, 972-475-9327, C_Hilson@msn.com

Treasurer's Report

-submitted by Kathie Blair, Treasurer

Balance Sheet 1-Jan-2004

Assets

Cash and Bank Accounts	
CD	\$10,156.42
Guaranty Bank	\$1,915.37
Total Cash and Bank Accounts	\$12,071.79
Other Assets	
Prepaid Expenses	\$159.27
Total Other Assets	\$159.27
Total Assets	\$12,231.06

Liabilities and Equity

Liabilities	
Scholarship Fund	\$100.00
Total Liabilities	\$100.00
Equity	\$12,131.06
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$12,231.06

Volunteers Needed:

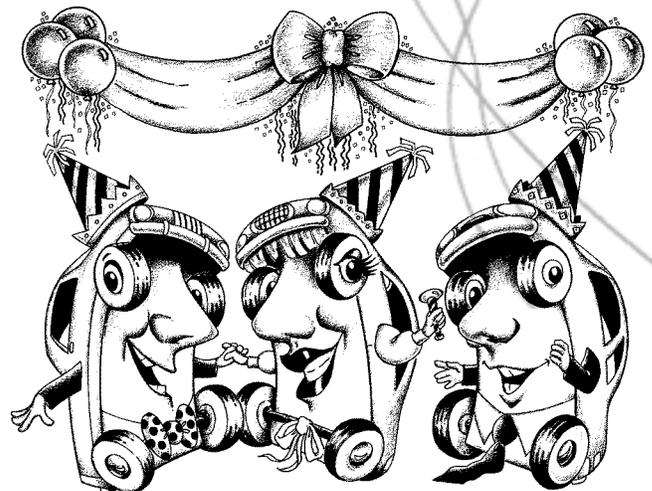
Friends of the Austin Public Library Book Sale

The Friends of the Austin Public Library Monster Book Sale will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 27 and 28. Lonestar Mensans have been helping out at the Friends' Book Sale for years. We staff an information table and talk to prospective members about Mensa, help to keep the book sale tables in order, help direct people to the books they are looking for, and help clean up after the sale (on Sunday). It only takes a couple hours, and you'll be helping out both Lonestar Mensa and the community. The volunteers at this event have always had a lot of fun and have gone home with lots of bargain books.

The sale will be at Crockett Center, which is on Highway 290 just east of I-35. It runs from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday and 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. Sunday it'll be fixed-price per bag and per box, so if you want lots of cheap books, Sunday's the day; of course the selection will be better Saturday (so consider helping both days!). We need volunteer all weekend; I'll arrange shifts based on when each of you can help. Please contact John Neemidge (by email - neemidge@usa.net - or by phone to 512-310-7863) if you can help out, and let me know when you can help. We really need volunteers for this event — if you've got time in your schedule, please consider helping out!

Belated February Birthdays

1	Tom Buckley
	Mr Dennis Robert McDaniel
2	Midge A Kocen
	Henry J Kubicek
3	Dennis L Crabill
	Mr Gregory A Wroblewski
4	Bradley Walls
5	Jan Cox
	Sankaran Kartik Jayanarayanan
6	Ms Sage McKenzie
9	Meredith S Hardy
	Judy L Mittag
	Steven Vaughan
14	Michael Seay
16	Scott Feller
17	Sandra Ellen St John
18	Mr James O Dobbs
	Dr Tom Rhyne
	Matthew L Rife
	Ms Elizabeth Harry Waring
19	Jeff Keys
21	Eugene J Montag
22	Amy Klima
23	Russell Jackson
25	Mr Anthony Edward J Campbell
	Angela Bevin Martindill
27	Dave McCracken
	Geri Lynne Neemidge
29	Chris Hilton



Pete's Planes

-by Jane Thompson

When I was in my 30s my uncle Peter, who was in his 60s, used to visit his big sister, my mother, a couple of times a year in Oklahoma City. He'd stop on his way up from Houston to pick me up to have company on the drive. We'd talk companionably on the long drive about all kinds of subjects, but Peter had one habit that puzzled me. The north Texas and central Oklahoma skies are enormous; Pete would glance up and idly say, "Plane at three o'clock," then go right back to the conversation. Sometimes I could see a plane; other times I thought I could see a tiny speck; occasionally I couldn't see anything. Finally I asked him about the obsession with the planes. They certainly weren't bothering us.

My uncle explained that during World War II, he was a navigator on a bomber based in Italy; on his first mission he had finished his navigating duties and was just hanging out-when a piece of shrapnel burst through the side of fuselage, tore through his parachute and went out the opposite side of the plane. For the first time that young man really realized that death was only inches away from him at all times. From then on, he made it his mission to help the pilot out by, whenever he was not actually navigating, watching for planes and reporting their positions. He took this so seriously that forty years later he was unable to stop watching for planes and noting their positions.

I asked him then what he thought when he learned of the Ultra secret; he replied that he was absolutely astounded to learn that there was actual intelligence behind the death and destruction he visited on the people below him. He said that he understood what he was fighting for and why it is necessary, but he also knew that the people whose property he was destroying and whose lives he was taking or ruining had as little to do with the actual war as he did. He hated his job in the war and did not know that he had ever essentially had any real effect on winning the war. That was all he ever told me about the war. I couldn't get any more stories or, certainly, any details out of him.

Sitting between us was another story that I knew but did not ever have the nerve to ask him about. World War II was the biggest thing that ever happened, but it was made up of a whole bunch of little things. Every single person's life in that generation was changed in some way by the war, from my friend Jack who started life as a Polish peasant child but who died in Dallas a millionaire, coming here by way of Auschwitz, to the parish priest who fled Hitler in Austria to teach in my grammar school in

Oklahoma City, to every American who would not have had an opportunity for an education if it hadn't been for the GI Bill. If you talk to people in their seventies and eighties about World War II, they all have an interesting story to tell. Except Pete; he wouldn't have told you his story. He told his older sister, who eventually told me. But it was a big family secret. Still is. It's just a tiny little bump in the American road to victory, just another human interest story in the biggest thing to ever happen in human history. Tell that to Pete.

Shortly after Pete graduated from college and just before he went into the Army Air Force, he married his college sweetheart, Rita, a lovely girl whom his enormous family very much approved of. After his months of training, he shipped out to Europe. Nine months after he left the country, Rita gave birth to their son, whom she named for Pete. Pete's big sister was thrilled with her nephew and visited Rita often. The whole family helped her out since Pete was gone for almost three years.

My mother was grateful at the end of the war. Unlike so many others, all of her many brothers and brothers-in-law returned safely, maybe a little worse for wear, but essentially in one piece. Pete, however, seemed bitter and reacted strangely. For one thing, instead of going on with his life, he insisted on divorcing Rita immediately. He paid his child support and visited his son regularly, but he wasn't on really good terms with Rita. None of the family could understand it. Everyone loved Rita and adored Petey. They chalked it up to things that happen to a man during wartime and tried to understand. It was thirty years before Peter remarried.

It was during the unhappy period after his second divorce that my mother asked Peter why he ever divorced Rita, and Pete, his defenses down, told her, "Midge, they were so desperate for aircrew in Italy when we graduated from flight school that we didn't get a leave after training. We shipped out right after graduation. I didn't see Rita from the time I went into training until I was mustered out in '45." Well, my mother was a math major in college and figured out the problem pretty fast. She really couldn't think of much of say.

That must have happened fairly often during the war, with birth control rather chancy and people being separated for such very long periods of time. I always wanted to ask Pete if he was celibate during those three years in Italy, but, as I said, I just couldn't work up the nerve. WWII was the biggest and sometimes the most noble undertaking of man, but it could be rough on the individual. Ask Pete about that.

What's Happening in March?

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.

Test the Nation

Friday, March 5 6:30-9:00pm

Legends Sports Bar - Holiday Inn NW

8901 Business Park Dr., Austin

Please refer to the article on page 4 for details.

ExComm Meeting

Monday, March 8

5:30pm

Buffet Palace

1012 W. Anderson Lane.

Contact Karen Werner at (512) 291-4677 to get an item on the agenda. All members welcome.

Monthly Meeting

Monday, March 8

7:00pm

Austin Public Library

North Village Branch

2139 W. Anderson Lane, Austin

Please see the announcement below for meeting details.

Waco Area Mensa Get-Together

Wednesday, March 17

7:00pm

Barnes & Noble Café

4909 W. Waco Dr., Waco

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

March Monthly Meeting

March's Monthly Meeting will feature a speaker from the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas. The topic will be "Marriage Equality." Because this month's Monthly Meeting falls on the night before the primary elections, the precise speaker is not known at press time. The speaker will be a staff person or board member for the organization.

Marriage equality has been in the news a lot lately. Republicans, including George Bush, are pushing for a constitutional amendment prohibiting marriage among gays and lesbians. The LGRL was a sponsor of National Freedom to Marry Week and was active in encouraging committed couples to apply for marriage licenses in Travis County the day after many couples were issued marriage licenses in San Francisco, an event echoed in many counties across America.

The speaker will talk about marriage equality, the ramifications of a constitutional amendment, and the "backlash" from

Spring Celebration Party

Saturday, March 20

2:30pm

9110 Curlew Drive, Austin

Karen Werner

(512) 291-4677

See article on page 4 for details.

Fold & Sticker

Thursday, March 25

(at TGIT)

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

Potluck SIG & Games Night

Saturday, March 27

6:00pm

Kelly Wagner & Steve Harsch's Home

1001 E. Riverside, Austin

(512) 443-9650

Theme: Today is Texas History Day. The theme is Texas dishes. Any effort to reduce salt or leave salt out of your dishes greatly appreciated. (Salt shakers will be available to add salt to your food yourself, of course.)

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.

Friends of the Austin Public Library Book Sale

Saturday, March 27

9am - 6pm

Sunday, March 28

11am - 4pm

Crockett Center, Austin

290 just east of I-35. Contact John Neemidge at (512) 310-7863 or neemidge@usa.net to volunteer.

See article on page 5.

the Massachusetts Supreme Court's decision upholding a constitutional right to marriage for all citizens. This writer also hopes our members will also consider whether gays and lesbians are the real threat to marriage today.

The LGRL works toward the elimination of social, legal, and economic discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity through lobbying, education, and research directed toward the Texas Legislature and other state governmental agencies.

It recently helped defeat legislation which would have prevented committed couples from adopting or providing foster homes for unwanted children.

Last month's meeting finished with a very lively question and answer discussion. I hope this one will, too. As always, civility and respect for our speaker (volunteer) is expected, and respectful debate and questioning is welcome.

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14	15	16	17 Waco Area Mensa	18 TGIT	19	20 Spring Celebration Party
21	22	23	24	25 TGIT <i>Fold & Sticker</i>	26	27 Library Book Sale Games Night
28 Library Book Sale	29	30	31			

2004