

Armadillo Literary Gazette

A Publication of Lonestar Mensa

Volume XXXI Number 2

February 2004



Lonestar Mensa Officers and Staff

Web Site: <http://www.lsm.us.mensa.org>

President †
Karen Werner
9110 Curlew Drive, Austin 78748
(512) 291-4677 karen_lsmmensa@yahoo.com

Vice President †
Margaret Wofford
(512) 266-8065 m_wofford@yahoo.com

Treasurer †
Kathie Blair
(512) 502-9083 kathie.blair@tdh.state.tx.us

Members at Large †
Helen Siders
(512) 799-6985 xlartemis@austin.rr.com
Janet Kres
(512) 836-5773 j_kres@msn.com
Mark Kres
(512) 836-5773 kresm@iia.org

Program Chair *
Volunteer needed. Please contact Karen Werner (see "President") if you are interested.

Publicity *
Paul Anderson
(512) 259-7824 wrdslngr@swbell.net

Newsletter Circulation Manager *
Helen Siders
(512) 799-6985 xlartemis@austin.rr.com

Gifted Children Resource *
Michele Vaughan
(512) 388-5970 michelerenee@austin.rr.com

Testing Coordinator *
Sam Waring
(512) 453-0730 curmudgn@prismnet.com

Membership †
John Neemidge
(512) 310-7863 gneemidge@usa.net

Bryan-College Station Area Coordinator
Jim Miller
(979) 777-9546 hj_miller@msn.com

Waco Area Coordinator *
Jerry Lenamon
(254) 399-9450

Ombudsman/Arbiter *
Kelly Wagner
(512) 443-9650 BunRab@aol.com

SIGHT Coordinator *
Steve Vaughan
(512) 388-5970 sv@blackhat.net

Regional Vice Chairman (RVC)
Dan Wilterding
(817) 573-4454 (before 10PM)
rvc6@us.mensa.org
504 Atchley Dr, Granbury TX 76048

† -- Elected position (voting) ‡-- Appointed position (voting)
* -- Appointed position (non-voting)

American Mensa, Ltd.
(817) 607-0060
AmericanMensa@us.mensa.org
www.us.mensa.org
1229 Corporate Drive West, Arlington, TX 76006-6103

Newsletter Editor *
Rachael Stewart
(512) 407-9753 bookbird@yahoo.com
506 Canion St, Austin, TX 78752

Special Contributors for February:
Jane Thompson
National Office

Publication Information

POSTMASTER: Please send change of address to:
ARMADILLO LITERARY GAZETTE
c/o American Mensa, Ltd., 1229 Corporate Dr West, Arlington, TX 76006-6103

The *ARMADILLO LITERARY GAZETTE* (USPS 554-650), the official publication of Lonestar Mensa, Group 786 of American Mensa, Ltd., is published monthly at 13106 Bidwell Dr, Austin, TX 78729. Periodical Postage Paid at Austin, TX.

Mensans who are not members of Lonestar Mensa may subscribe for \$10.00 per year. Send subscription requests to the publication address.

Submission Information: Submissions of all types will be accepted. The deadline is the 15th of each month. Submissions may be by email (ASCII/text format only) to the newsletter editor or by snail mail in typed format. Anonymous submissions are not accepted, although the author's identity may be withheld upon request. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and length. Items in this newsletter may be reprinted in other Mensa publications, with credit given, except for those works copyrighted by the author.

Advertising Rates and Policies

Non-commercial: Lonestar Mensa members may submit 2 per year at no charge. 4 line maximum, subject to editor's discretion as to date of publication.

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

We had our final Monthly Meeting at the University Hills Library this past month. Starting in February, the Monthly Meetings will be held at the North Village Library, 2139 W. Anderson Lane, on the second Monday of every month, starting at 7:00 p.m. February's meeting is on February 9. The library is located in a shopping center with plenty of free parking and numerous restaurants nearby.

We are still asking members who have not done so to log on to the national website (<http://www.us.mensa.org>), click on PROXYQUEST and register your proxy vote. Locally, our participation rate is about 20%; it is about the same nationwide. National needs 50% overall, or we will have to do it all over again, at great expense.

You should have recently received your Mensa renewal form for 2004. Please take the time to send in your renewal form and dues, if you are not a life member.

I hope to see more of you at upcoming regular events and other gatherings. We've been seeing new faces at TGIT and at various gatherings and parties. We've also been seeing some familiar faces who have been busy with other endeavors in recent months. Come out and join us.

We are still planning to have a Spring Party at my house on March 20, a combination crawfish boil and potluck. Also, if you haven't been to a Houston RG yet, SynRG:Swingin' Soiree will be held over Memorial Weekend again this year, May 28-31. Contact information: <http://gcmensa.com>, or contact Pat Spence, 10650 S.W. Plaza Court #41, Houston, TX 77074. And don't forget the AG in Las Vegas this year, June 30 through July 5. Other RGs are listed in every month's national Mensa Bulletin.

See you soon.

--Karen Werner, LSM President



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

Lonestar Mensa

January ExComm Meeting Minutes

January 6, 2004

Attending: Karen Werner, President; Margaret Wofford, Vice President; Kathie Blair, Treasurer; Janet Kres, Member at Large; Mark Kres, Member at Large; Helen Siders, Member at Large; and John Neemidge, Membership Chair.

Karen convened the meeting at 6:15.

Karen reported that the bank will not allow signature card changes without a resolution specifically addressing the subject. Moved, Janet, seconded, Margaret: to pass a resolution putting Karen and Kathie on the bank account for the coming year. Motion passed unanimously.

Karen reported that she was able to move the monthly meetings to the North Village Branch Library from 7-9 pm on the second Monday of each month. Attendees expressed gratitude for her efforts. After discussion, it was agreed to have future ExComm meetings at restaurants near North Village Branch Library. The February meeting will be at the Souper Salad on Anderson Lane.

John reported that Dan Wilterding has requested each group to set up a phone tree to beg members to submit their proxies to correct a technical inconsistency between the Certificate of Incorporation and Bylaws. The Austin group currently stands at a 21% proxy submission rate. Attendees decided not to set up a phone tree unless the deadline approached and the item was in danger of failing. Helen suggested putting a copy of the proxy in the 'Dillo. Attendees agreed that was a good idea. John will ask the national office for a list of LSM members who have not exercised their proxy and will send an e-mail reminder.

Helen reported that the post office charged a higher rate for last month's mailing due to a formatting issue with the 'Dillo. She will ask Rachael to reformat the label page to avoid future problems.

Karen adjourned the meeting at 6:45.

Respectfully Submitted,

--Margaret Wofford, LSM Vice President



It's time for **CultureQuest® XV**, a 90-minute test of cultural knowledge for American and Canadian Mensans. Questions range from politics to science and from entertainment to current events. The test is composed of what are intended to be "family" questions, so there shouldn't be any embarrassing moments for adults and children who team up together.

CultureQuest® ("CQ") was once referred to as "an annual test of the obscure". This year's test will be different. "Cultural Knowledge" is our quest, aiming for accessibility over obscurity. It takes place anywhere and everywhere simultaneously on **SUNDAY, MARCH 28**. The top 20 teams receive cash awards, traditionally designated for their Local Groups' scholarship funds.

Each team captain must submit a completed registration with the \$40 **FILING FEE** by **MARCH 1**. Each team, comprising one to five members, can be supplemented by up to two alternates. During the test the team may use no reference materials, computers, calculators nor other assistance outside of some scratch paper and its own members' memories and wits.

So get a copy of the Rules and the Registration Form, round up some teammates, and sign up for CQ XV today! You'll find them at www.us.mensa.org/best_of/culturequest.php3. For hard copies, or if you have difficulty with the Web site, call the National Office at 817-607-0060. Adult Mensans seeking teammates may find their local or regional officers willing to assist in the matchmaking. Last year, 64 Local Groups fielded teams! More information on CQ can be found in the January issue of the Mensa Bulletin. Any other questions can be emailed to CultureQuest® Coordinator Eliot T. Kieval (CultureQuest@us.mensa.org).

CultureQuest® SAMPLE QUESTIONS:

Not all of these questions have appeared verbatim on prior CQs, but all are representative of what you might find this year:

1. In most versions of the Stations of the Cross, Jesus meets two women who are named; name one such woman.
2. In the United States Constitution, what does the Seventh Amendment concern?
3. At Alamogordo, who famously quoted the line, "I am become death, destroyer of worlds"?
4. Identify the famous work of literature (and the author) from the brief synopsis provided:
 - a. After 18 years alone, the title character might have exclaimed "Thank God it's Friday!"
 - b. With a Miller, a Carpenter and pilgrims aplenty, the author endowed literature with perpetual glory - and perhaps the first Traveling Salesman's story.
 - c. Gregor Samsa awakes to find he's a bug - the cockroach kind.
5. Vexillology is the study of what?
6. Name the man famous for inventing the mobile; he also custom-painted a Braniff Airlines plane.
7. What are you doing if you're doing "Double Dutch"?
8. Who ran against Dwight D. Eisenhower on the Democratic ticket in 1952 and 1956?
9. Hirohito published several books and was considered an expert on ichthyology. What does ichthyology deal with?

(Answers may be found on page 7. --Ed.)

American Mensa needs your vote:

- to allow members to vote at a meeting other than in-person;
- to set a quorum for the Annual Business Meeting of 100 members, the smallest number allowed under New York law.

We need your proxy. We need proxies voting YES from almost 24,000 members, a majority of our membership.

Mail us the proxy in your *Mensa Bulletin*. Today. Or fax it to us at 877-697-7699. Or vote online at proxy.us.mensa.org.



Birdie's Story

--by Jane Thompson

Every year my father loaded all of us up and we took a National Lampoon-type summer vacation. They were just awful--seven people in an un-airconditioned car in August with the goal of seeing how many miles could be driven in two weeks. I knew every greasy spoon on Route 66 and can especially remember the time spent by the side of the road changing tires before the invention of the tubeless tire (everyone over the age of 50 is right with me on that one). While the trips were nightmares, they're the kind of thing that I'm glad I did a half-century later--I learned a lot and saw a lot of things I wouldn't have otherwise. Still, I wouldn't do it again for anything.

There was one really good part to every vacation--the first three days. The first three days every year were spent driving to the Gulf Coast to spend time in Galveston. No matter where we were going on vacation--California, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota. When we were little, we didn't question that part of the trip--it was just a great time on the beach before the long, hot days cooped up in the car.

Later, we realized that little side trip resulted from a promise my father made when he and my mother got engaged at the University of Texas. She was born and raised in Houston and her biggest reservation about moving to Oklahoma City was leaving her beloved Gulf behind. My father promised her she could visit it once a year, and, to his credit, kept his promise for sixty years. We loved our trips to the beach as much as our mother--Galveston with its white beaches, palm trees, and colorful houses seemed exotic after central Oklahoma. We knew we were there when we heard our mother's unvarying cry, "Look--oleanders!"

As children, we were confused by our Houston grandmother's refusal to join us on our beach jaunts. She refused, with no explanation, to ever go to the beach with us. Even for a picnic, even for an afternoon. Our mother tried to explain to us that she was afraid of the waves, of the noise, of the smell of the ocean. We thought that was ridiculous and laughed at such an idea. Afraid of the Gulf of Mexico's three-foot waves? We reveled in them and competed to see how far we could swim out. We had no understanding of what happened to my grandmother when she was ten years old or that she had never recovered from it.

My grandmother, Birdie, was born in 1890 and raised on Galveston Island. At that time, Galveston was the port of

Texas and an honest-to-God boom town, with more millionaires per capita than any other city in the country. It must have been a beautiful place to live then, because it still is, even with many more people on the island. Then the population of Galveston Island was 38,000; now it is 59,000. The sky was the limit--it was an excellent place for my great-grandfather, Patrick Rabitt, a civil engineer and architect, to make his fortune.

Patrick was a member of the firm of N.J. Clayton, Architects, who built schools, churches, and opulent homes for the scions of the gilded age, some of which can still be seen towering over the streets of the city. The most important one in my grandmother's story was the Gresham home, begun in 1886 and finished in 1893. Walter Gresham was a cotton baron and U.S. Congressman; he was also a man who hedged his bets, for he charged his architects with building a home that would withstand any storm. He gave them an almost unlimited budget; the house cost \$250,000 to build.

The house now known as the Bishop's Palace is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of the excesses of the gay nineties. It was constructed of two layers of bricks laid end-to-end and faced with stone. Of course it had huge windows to make the most of the sea breeze, with wide verandas and all the modern conveniences, including gas, electricity, and running water. Gresham had his architects build in fourteen fireplaces to counteract the winter damp and panel the inside of the house in rare woods. The windows are stained glass, deeply recessed, and equipped with built-in hurricane shutters. The "ground" floor of the house is fifteen feet up and built over a deep cellar; Gresham wanted plenty of room for flooding.

One hundred years ago, weather forecasting was in its infancy and American optimism was at its apex. People knew a hurricane could be devastating to tiny, shallow Galveston Island, but hoped it could dodge a direct hit. The Gulf is normally a placid sea; people just assumed it would always be. On September 8, 1900, they were proved so wrong.

As the storm grew and the waters rose, the architects who had poured their expertise into building the perfect storm-proof structure moved their families into the shelter of the Gresham home. Two hundred people spent the most horrifying night ever in that house, my grandmother, only ten years old, among them. The rains poured, the winds blew away the weather instruments, and the tidal surge rose to 15 feet. The Gresham house sustained no

damage, but when the 200 emerged the next morning, they were met with a scene of indescribable chaos and horror.

Over half the town was destroyed, and between 6,000 and 10,000 people were dead--no one knows exactly how many. I wish I could tell you about my grandmother's memories of that horrible night and that awful scene and the days that followed, but she never spoke of it. Not ever--not to her parents, not to her husband or children or her grandchildren. My grandmother was to grow up without aunts and uncles and cousins. Her father could have stayed in Galveston and made a good living because, incredibly, the town decided to rebuild--to build a 17-foot stone seawall, to raise the level of the town 17 feet, and to replace the destroyed structures. But their personal losses were too great and the Rabitt family relocated by the first day of 1901.

There was no diagnosis of post-traumatic stress syndrome in 1900, no thought of counseling. People dealt with their shock as best they could, and most of them came through, but quirks remained--like a terrible fear of storms that never left.

My mother told us that the shadows of the storm always remained. Her mother was unhappy that her children chose to ride the interurban to the beach at every opportunity and was nervous until they returned safely home. Whenever a storm blew over the Gulf, my grandmother shut the windows, drew the curtains, and sat in the dark, praying the rosary over and over--probably just as she had in 1900. In Oklahoma City, thunderstorms are so common and so violent that they become a form of entertainment--but not to my grandmother. Again, she prayed through them when she visited.

When our family buried a relative, we walked away, never to return to the grave to "visit" or leave flowers. It took me a while to figure out that my grandmother had never done these things because after the hurricane there were no bodies to honor--people were swept out to sea or the bodies burned on the beach--so the tradition of tending graves was one that was just never followed in my family.

But my sister and I found a way to visit the graves of those lost in the storm of 1900. The year of the 100th anniversary we planned our annual vacation to the beach to coincide with the commemoration ceremonies for the victims of the hurricane so we could honor those members of the family who died that night.

Look for photographs of the hurricane's aftermath on the NOAA website.

Hello Region 6!

Next month the AMC will meet again, this time in Charlottesville, Virginia during the Jefferson Country RG. Although the agenda has not yet been set some topics are sure to arise. Already in the works is a discussion (debate?) concerning the relationship of American Mensa to the various national SIGs -- should we embrace them, providing resources, guidance and support or should we distance ourselves farther and cut down, constrain or eliminate official interaction and publicity? Both aspects are grounded in risk management concerns, both views have outspoken proponents and opponents. Whatever comes about, chances are that the organizational relationship with SIGs will not be the same in 2-4 years. Pity; I'd just as soon see things stay as they are, but I seem to be in a minority.

The Risk Management Committee is scheduled to present formal recommendations for changes in policy or structure in the relationships between AML and the SIGS, AML and local groups, and AML and children (members and guests). {The previous sentence is taken/adapted from the December '03 Mini-Minutes}. I'll know and be able to report more after that presentation; the March AMC agenda will be available on or about February 20 -- please look it over and let me know what you think.

Keeping track of things Mensa fashion... Did you ever change your name or move and not get your newsletter or Bulletin for *way* too long? Have you ever changed your phone number or email address and wondered why you quit getting calls from the local group? If so, could it be that you forgot to update your Personal Data Questionnaire (PDQ)? The PDQ goes out with renewals every year and provide an easy way to keep your information and preferences up to date; it's also available online at <http://www.us.mensa.org> . PLEASE take the time (just a few moments) to make sure that your contact info is current.

Have you submitted your proxy?

Online at <https://secure.us.mensa.org/proxy/> or on paper (ask your LocSec).

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*

DA-DUM! -- February's Monthly Meeting

THE MONTHLY MEETING HAS CHANGED DAYS AND LOCATION: MEETINGS WILL BE HELD ON THE SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT THE NORTH VILLAGE LIBRARY BRANCH, 2139 W. ANDERSON LANE, BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M.

Our speaker at the February 9, 2004 Monthly Meeting is Vicky Dehnert, frequent community speaker for The Texas Campaign for the Environment, a grass-roots environmental group that promotes solutions to environmental problems. Ms. Dehnert will speak about the Texas Campaign for the Environment and its efforts to encourage safe disposal of electronic waste. Ms. Dehnert became aware of the growing problem of e-waste (electronic waste) in our culture when she continually unearthed closets full of obsolete equipment in homes and businesses in her work as an organizing consultant. Nobody was sure how to dispose of it all. She decided to become involved and help educate others about the issue.

If you're like most folks who regularly use a computer, you probably have an old computer, monitor or printer in your closet or garage gathering dust. This electronic waste - or e-waste - is a looming environmental crisis. One study estimated that there will be one billion pieces of e-waste by the end of the decade. But the danger also comes from the toxins inside - lead, mercury, cadmium and toxic fire retardants that have been found in high levels in the breast milk of American women, including Austinites.

Texas Campaign for the Environment has been working to promote a solution to electronic waste which has been adopted in Europe and Japan - having electronics producers take back their obsolete products for safe disposal and recycling. The organization is letting folks know which electronics recyclers have pledged to practice good environmental stewardship.

Her talk will include a half hour video of a shocking investigation that found that much U.S. e-waste is being crudely treated in Chinese villages for scrap materials.

Join us at our new location (or old location, for those of you who attended meetings at this site two years ago).

CQ Sample Answers:

1. Veronica or Mary;
2. Trial by jury;
3. Oppenheimer;
4. a) Defoe - *Robinson Crusoe*, b) Chaucer - *Canterbury Tales*, c) Kafka - *Metamorphosis*;
5. Flags;
6. Calder;
7. Jumping rope;
8. Stevenson;
9. Fish

What's Happening in FEBRUARY?!

Thank Goodness It's Thursday

Central Market Café

Every Thursday

6:00-8:00 p.m.

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.

ExComm Meeting

Monday, 9 February

5:45 p.m.

Souper Salad

2438 W. Anderson Lane, Austin

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

Directions: Souper Salad is across from Northcross Mall, west of the intersection with Burnet Rd. From Mopac, take the Spicewood Springs/Anderson Ln exit, head east on Anderson Ln. From I-35, take 183 west to Burnet Rd (or to Mopac), turn right onto Anderson Ln.

Monthly Meeting

Monday, 9 February

7:00-8:45 p.m.

Austin Public Library

North Village Branch

2139 W. Anderson Lane, Austin

For meeting details, see the article in the left-hand column.

Directions: The Library is in a strip mall on the south-east corner of the intersection of Burnet Rd. and Anderson Ln, that opens onto both streets. From Mopac, take the Spicewood Springs/Anderson Ln exit, head east on Anderson Ln. From I-35, take 183 west to Burnet Rd (or to Mopac), turn left onto Anderson Ln.

Waco Area Mensa Get-Together

Wednesday, 18 February

7:00 p.m.

Barnes & Noble Café

4909 W. Waco Dr., Waco

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

Fold & Sticker

Thursday, 26 February

(at TGIT)

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

Potluck SIG & Games Night

Saturday, 28 February

6:00 p.m.

Kelly Wagner & Steve Harsch's Home

1001 E. Riverside, Austin

(512) 443-9650

Theme: Back to Ethnic -- German Food! Heavy food for that last gasp of Winter. Think potatoes, ja?

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.

POSTMASTER: Please send change of address to:
ARMADILLO LITERARY GAZETTE
 c/o American Mensa, Ltd.
 1229 Corporate Dr West
 Arlington, TX 76006-6103

PERIODICAL
 Postage Paid
 at **AUSTIN, TX**
 Permit #554-650

February

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

2004