

Armadillo Literary Gazette

A Publication of Lonestar Mensa

Volume XXXI Number 1

January 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to

~~**2003!**~~

(Oops, pardon me...)

2004!!!!

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Please submit ads to the newsletter editor.

A Word to the Wise

-By Karen Werner, President

LISTEN UP! NEWS UPDATES:

A new year always brings changes or promises of changes, resolutions made and resolutions kept. As many of you may know, I was previously a Member at Large on the ExComm (2001 and 2002) and the Program Chair (2001 and 2002). As President, I plan to resume my habit of attending most or all meetings and parties; I am looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new ones. One of my resolutions is to keep Lonestar Mensa growing and vibrant, and to persuade less active members to become active again or to become newly active.



Beginning in January, we have changed the day and time of both the monthly meeting and the ExComm meeting. January's monthly meeting will be on the first Tuesday, January 6, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting place, University Hills Library, remains the same. The day, time and place of the ExComm meeting will be e-mailed to the announce list, or you can get information by calling me at 291-4677. We are looking at permanent sites for both meetings and plan to announce them in the February edition of the Armadillo. I anticipate the monthly meetings will be held on Tuesday evenings, so please plan your schedules accordingly. I am hopeful we can get more members to attend these meetings and I anticipate a great lineup of speakers in the coming months.

We are still seeking a Program Chair to secure speakers for our monthly meetings. This is an appointed, voting position. You don't need to attend all monthly meetings; I will be happy to introduce speakers if you cannot attend. We need someone who will solicit speakers and gather their biographical and topic information. If you have any interest, please contact me by phone or email to discuss the details of this fun and interesting job. I can tell you from experience that the job does not require a significant amount of time, so don't be bashful; I'm sure you will enjoy it as much as I did.

We had another fun Holiday Party this year, which is the subject of another column in this issue. I am currently planning a springtime party for March. The tentative date is Saturday, March 20, the first day of spring. The party will be a combined crawfish boil (one of my specialties) and potluck.

If you read Walter Stewart's column in the December issue of the Armadillo, you know that we had a total of 10 votes in this year's Executive Committee election. This is out of a total of more than 450 members in the local chapter. Even

if you don't vote, I hope you will attend gatherings throughout the year and meet and socialize with other local members. We have a number of exceptional human beings in our group who I'm certain you would like to know and socialize with, so get out there and start meeting people! Don't forget, we gather for TGIT every Thursday at Central Market. I've met several newly transplanted members recently at various gatherings, and I found them all totally delightful; if you have not attended any events lately, get out there. Also, if you want to host a party or any other informal get-together, just let me know or send an announcement to our Newsletter Editor, Rachael Stewart, for inclusion in the monthly newsletter.

I, myself, will be submitting columns regarding one of my favorite activities: eating. I will be publishing a column with some of my favorite recipes and I will also be publishing a column featuring restaurant reviews. I've visited more than 100 restaurants in Austin and the surrounding area since I moved here in 1997, and I try to visit new ones every month. I will recommend some standouts, and will keep my opinions to myself (unless asked) regarding the stinkers I have visited.

In closing, I would like to thank all of those members who volunteered for and filled leadership positions last year, all those who volunteered to help at events, and all those who attended TGIT, games night, or any of the other fun events on last year's calendar. We have a number of people who have held and/or continue to hold elected or appointed leadership positions; there is always a need for volunteers for these jobs, and there are never enough volunteers.

In addition to those continuing on in their positions, I would like to specially recognize the following people in transition: John Neemidge, past president, and Geri Neemidge, the prior past president, have been and continue to be invaluable to the vibrancy of this group. Geri has resigned as Membership Chair; during the past year, she also helped out with Program Chair duties during the position's vacancy. John has relinquished President duties. As many members know, John and Geri are having a lot of fun being parents to Paige and David. Luckily, John has agreed to be appointed to the position of Membership Chair. He is also the RG chair for this year's RG. I hope to attend many more parties at the residence of John, Geri, Paige and David. I'd like to extend a warm thanks to Midge Kocen for her work as Treasurer for the last two years, as well as her assistance and attendance at many Lonestar Mensa events over the last few years. I also want to welcome our new Treasurer, Kathie Blair, who recently moved to Austin, and was mentioned in December's column on new local members.

Don't be a stranger. See you soon.

December ExComm Meeting Minutes

-submitted by Janet Kres, Member-at-Large

Dec 13, 2003

The meeting was held at University Hills Public Library. Attendees: Janet Kres, Mark Kres, John Neemidge, Geri Neemidge, Midge Kocen, Margaret Wofford, Karen Werner, Kathie Blair.

John Neemidge called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m. Midge Kocen distributed copies of the treasurer's report. The pay pal was a big help for the Holiday Party this year. She does not yet have the November or December postal expenses. Midge gave the bank forms for authorized signatures to Karen for completion. She recommended staying with the current bank, Guaranty, which has numerous branches.

John Neemidge mentioned an item from last TGIT meeting. Some members had suggested using Lonestar Mensa funds to provide a gratuity in the amount of \$100 to the Central Market staff who helped set up the tables. It was the consensus of the Ex Com group that the TGIT attendees should provide the gratuity. It might be possible to notify other attendees of that group of the opportunity to donate to this gift, prior to the donation.

Geri Neemidge distributed copies of the bylaws. John will create a list of "Actions Still in Effect" -- such as giving the treasurer authority to move the CDs, and members not serving as speakers, etc.

John will speak to Helen Siders about using the chat list concerning the recent obituary of a Mensan.

Karen discussed changing the Monthly meetings from Saturday to another location and another day - Tuesday. The January 6, 2004 meeting will be at 7 p.m. TUESDAY - at the University Hills library. The Ex Com meeting place and time is still pending. An announcement will be sent to the members.

Karen would like to have a "spring party" on the 20th of March (which is the first day of spring).

Janet Kres moved that Lone Star Mensa funds be used to purchase name tags for the new officers. Seconded by Margaret Wofford. Motion approved.

Karen appointed John Neemidge as new Membership Chair; Program Chair candidates are being solicited; all others in appointed positions are affirmed.

Karen adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Kres, acting secretary

In Memoriam, Phillip Cook

LSM member Phillip Arford Cook passed away on December 9, 2003 due to a sudden illness. Phillip was an active participant in the LSM chat list. He was born on April 23rd, 1970 in Eldorado, Arkansas. He worked at Dames and Moore/URS as a Project Accountant. Phillip was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying fly fishing and hunting in Alaska, Africa, Colorado, Louisiana and Texas. Phillip will be remembered for his quick wit, sarcastic sense of humor - but mostly for his sense of devotion to his friends and his caring for others. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Seton Heart Fund, the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity or a charity of your choice.

January Monthly Meeting

The January meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 6, at 7:00 p.m., at the University Hills Library.

This month's speaker will be Jimmy Henig, School Director at Capitol City Careers and Southwest Institute of Technology. Mr. Henig will talk about proprietary schools and their role in adult education and adult job placement and advancement.

Capitol City Careers is a private adult training/vocational school which trains students to work in entry level legal positions. Southwest Institute of Technology is a separate school which trains students to work in the electronics and computer industries. The two schools are part of an organization which has been in business for more than 30 years and which includes a total of four schools in the Austin area.

Mr. Henig will talk about the growing role of private proprietary schools in today's educational and workforce environments. He will discuss the regulatory structure, the faculty and student demographics, training goals and expectations, and job results achieved. He will compare these educational programs to similar programs offered by business schools, community colleges and universities. The number of schools offering specialized vocational training is increasing, and Mr. Henig will point out various factors which have caused this, and well as the role these schools may play in the future.

Mr. Henig has worked in proprietary schools for 13 years. He started out in marketing and sales as an Admissions Advisor, advanced to Admissions Director, and eventually began working as a School Director several years ago. He attended The University of Texas as a business major a number of years ago, and is just now getting around to completing his Bachelor's Degree, which is scheduled to happen soon. He has been married to Angie for 14 years and is the proud owner of two dogs and a cat.

December Holiday Party Review

-by Karen Werner, President

The Holiday Party was held at Zilker Park Clubhouse again this year. The party started at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 7, and people stayed to see this season's lighting of the Zilker Park Tree at 6:30. About 30-35 people attended, including many new faces. Several attendees were new to Austin, and a few members who haven't attended any events in a number of years also showed up. Hopefully, this is a sign of things to come in the new year. Brian Corcoran brought a beautiful, perfectly cooked, roast turkey. He also showed up in an elegant suit and tie. Others also dressed up and added something special to the festivities. Don Drumtra wore a suit and tie, although the tie featured the Tazmanian Devil (he insists it was a gift from a loving son). There were several beautiful women dressed in elegant red holiday dresses. A number of people arrived early to prepare (and sample) food and hang decorations, including Margaret Wofford, Geri and John Neemidge, Dave DeVore, Midge Kocen and Karen Werner. It might be my imagination, but I could swear we had much better gifts overall during this year's White Elephant gift exchange. I stole a stuffed chimpanzee and large bottle of white wine, only to have it stolen from me. Other gifts included rosemary infused vinegar, videotapes (also stolen), books, puzzles, Bed and Bath products, an antique dictionary, and French red wine. It was good to see so many old and new faces. I hope to see you again soon.



DaveSIG - David Gilder, David Miller, David Neemidge, and David Devore



John congratulates Silver Service recipients Helen Siders & Rachael Stewart



Holiday Party-goers enjoy the fun.

Photo Credits:
DaveSIG & Party
Scene: John Neemidge
Silver Service: Geri Neemidge

Herein Monsters Lie, part IV

-by Brian Patrick Corcoran, copyright 2002

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.

I don't recall how long we remained like this. Minutes perhaps, but eventually a new menacing reality started to breach my awareness.

"Quint", I addressed him in quiet sincerity. He raised his head from the Captain's chest and looked at me sheepishly, tears still in his eyes.

"Quint, get hold of yourself, We're in serious trouble here. Take a look around you.", I begged him with earnest candor.

He raised himself upon his knees and stared directly into my eyes wiping the tears from his face as he ascended and halfheartedly looked about him in both directions as his focus returned. I could tell the precise moment when the awful truth dawned upon him. He stopped dead in his tracks and stiffened like a spooked cat. On either side of us were ruptured drums of gasoline spewing their contents down the smashed stairwell to the cabin below. A thick, smothering gasoline aroma hung in the air. When the stream of flammable liquid found its way to the engine room, it stood a better than even chance of sending both of us to the moon.

"Oh my God!" He exclaimed.

In a flash Quint mounted the ladder to the bridge to shut off the motors before the exhaust heat ignited the ambient fumes. He stopped half way up, and, dangling by one leg and with one arm pointed at me commanded, "Get to the bow and throw out the life raft. We have to get off this boat." The intelligent flash of his eyes and the authoritative tone with which he addressed told me that the great wave of grief had passed over him. Such was the nature of his courage that it refused to compromise reality in the face of such great adversity.

While fumbling with the unfamiliar task of launching the life raft I could plainly hear Quint's voice as he clutched at the radio microphone frantically trying to raise another boat. "Mayday, Mayday. This is the Argonaut. We are dead and adrift at the following G.P.S. coordinates and request a tow."

I was unable to ascertain the precise meaning of the crackling that came back on the radio, but when Quint returned to join me at the bow he confided that the nearest boat was on its way, 45 minutes from our destination. It was another fishing charter called The Dreadnaught whose captain was a good friend of Mabry's. Quint had not informed him of the Captain's death.

"We have to get off this boat", he told me in no uncertain terms. "It's not safe. It could go up in flames any second." With that he helped me slide the flotation canister over the bow and into the water below. When it reached the end of its tether releasing the retaining pin, the device hissed and unfolded itself into a sizeable yellow flotation platform.

"Jump in and paddle around to the stern. I'll meet you there" he told me. "I have to gather some things from the bridge first." With that he turned and vanished from my sight on what was apparently a mission of considerable urgency. The next thing I remember was seeing him high on the bridge stuffing what appeared to be some inconsequential personal items in a zippered gym bag.

I was about to jump into the sea of my own reluctant volition when the explosion from below buckled the floorboards beneath me pitching my body upward and overboard as though launched from a diving board. I somersaulted twice through the air before the water met me with a painful stinging slap on the flat of my back. The unexpected explosion, shock of the brine and the stinging pain had left me devoid of focus for only the briefest of moments. When I surfaced near the raft, gasping for air, I could clearly see the smoking hulk of the Argonaut engulfed in flames from stem to stern.

Grabbing hold of my senses, I swam the short distance to the raft and slithered aboard. I seized the paddle and pumped furiously around to the back of the flaming vessel. Half way there I spotted Quint, still high up on the flying bridge clutching his gym bag. He was surrounded by flames and barely visible through the thick blanket of choking smoke that was now enveloping him. Quint spun around and like an athlete heaving a shot put sent the gym bag in a tall wide arc through the smoke and over the crackling flames. It landed with a splash bare inches in front of me. I could not help but notice how light it was when I pulled it aboard the raft.

Meanwhile, the Argonaut took on water from the numerous ruptures in its lower hull and started to list. Already the bow was beneath the waves. The flaming fuel had spread out over the surface of the water placing

poor Quint in further peril. I could not approach closer without jeopardizing the fragile life raft. Quint's life hung in a delicate balance.

As the fiery fuel spread out over the water's surface, I was compelled to paddle further and further away from the flaming corpse of the doomed Argonaut. It was then I saw his body flying through the smoke and flames that were closing in upon him. Taking advantage of the boat's severe list, and aided by a short running jump, he had propelled himself forward, diving headlong into the flaming sea, barely clearing the edge of the burning vessel.

Desperately, I waited for Quint to surface, pinning hope against hope that he would not rise among the spreading flames to have his lungs instantly incinerated. "Come on. Come on" I urged the unforgiving waters. After a minute of this suspense I glanced at my watch to time the event and held my own breath until he would appear safely at the surface. Another minute went by with no sight of him. I glanced again at my watch. Two minutes had gone by and I had not taken my eyes off the water in front of me. I could no longer hold my own breath and let go in a long heaving gasp. If I could not hold my breath longer, how could Quint? Three minutes went by. Then four. Then five.

When I was finally forced to concede that Quint had perished in this never-ending tragedy along with the good Captain, I grasped the paddle next to me and smashed it furiously against the water cursing the sea with a string of obscene invectives as the only demonstration of rage and frustration available to me.

"I didn't know you thought that much of me, Yankee Boy", came a voice from behind me. There was Quint, unscathed, his bright white shark's teeth perched above folded arms as he dangled in the water over the back edge of the raft. He had not confided in me that he had spent his youth as a pearl diver off the coast of New Zealand and that the paltry 50 yard underwater cruise had been a cakewalk for him.

"How long have you been there you rotten son of a bitch?", I cursed at him.

"Since the first time you looked at your watch, about four minutes ago.", he answered, highly amused by the question.

So there I sat, half in shock, half in relief, and half in anger when impulsively all 150 % of me reached over and grabbed him by his thick black hair, mercilessly yanking him onto the raft. With the flaming hulk of the

Argonaut as a backdrop, I pinned him to the floor of the raft and started choking him to vent my anger. He immediately broke my hold and with one swoop of his leg knocked me off balance and in an instant had me on my stomach with my arms behind my back coughing, gagging and spitting the seawater that immersed my face.

"Relax Yankee Boy. We've got at least a half hour before the Dreadnaught arrives to get us out of this pickle. If you can put up with me that long, we'll both live to see tomorrow." As I calmed down he loosened his hold and eventually released me. It's hard to sort out emotions when so many run so high. I settled back against the side of the raft, coughing out seawater and panting heavily, all the time staring at him quizzically, debating whether I should embrace him or kill him.

"One thing is for sure." He mused, "They won't have any trouble spotting us with that column of smoke." There she stood, the once-proud Argonaut, her gleaming white superstructure now charred to total blackness. It was awash with the sea just above the deck line, the giant she-devil of a bill fish, now as charred and mutilated as the Argonaut herself, prostrate across the stern.

"What about the Captain? What about his body? Doesn't he deserve a Christian burial?" I asked in a hollow, stilted voice.

"Don't worry about the Captain." Quint answered. "I knew him better than any man. He lived the life he loved and died the death he would have chosen. A religious man he was not. If he had a god it was the sea itself and to the sea we shall commend him, body and soul. That boat was his life and he'll be buried with it. He would have wanted it that way, over the edge of the Great Abyss."

No sooner had Quint completed those words when the Argonaut upended, leaving only her stern exposed. The great she-devil of a billfish, the Black Marlin from hell, gently floated out to sea and ingloriously disappeared beneath the rolling swells. Two minutes later the Argonaut itself, with the Captain's body aboard bobbed its final bob and it too vanished forever, joining its nemesis beneath the waves.

In the end, he had kept his word, the good Captain, that he would come back with a world's record or he would not come back at all. And all that remained to mark his passing was scattered, charred and smoking detritus intermingled among disparate patches of flaming fuel. The finality and awful silence of it all sent a horrible overpowering depression descended upon me like a

paralyzing fog.

The crew of The Dreadnaught, all close friends of Captain Mabry, was kind enough to leave us to our own thoughts during the long trip back to Port Cairns, to deal with the tragedy in our own way. Sitting in the comfort and security of the boat's sparse cabin, slouched in silence directly across from each other, we sipped at rum to calm our nerves.

"They'll never believe us, you know." I said to Quint breaking the long silence. "About the gigantic Black Marlin, I mean, and what happened out there."

Quint solemnly raised his eyes to mine. A light came into them and ever so slowly a sheepish grin appeared. "Yes they will, Yankee Boy." He responded.

With that he reached down and retrieved the gym bag at his feet. Dramatically, he unzipped it and reached inside. When his hand emerged it held four video tapes.

"Cockpit view, bridge view, radar mast wide view and radar mast narrow view." He said. "I hit that recording switch the instant I spotted the three males and pulled the tapes while I was surrounded by smoke. Good sound quality, too! They'll believe us all right. And they'll kiss our asses for the privilege. It's all right here, Yankee Boy. All right here on tape." He mused as he put the tapes back and zipped the bag shut.

I was at a complete loss for words, but my sentiments were best expressed when I raised the palm of my hand and met his across that narrow isle in the most triumphant "high five" that ever transpired between two teammates.

The End

January Birthdays

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 3 Carla Valadez | 24 Leilani A Rose |
| 4 Jeffrey S Reeh | 25 Mr Harry D Keirns |
| 11 David Allan Young | Mr James G Zimmerman |
| 13 Scott Peitzer | 26 Mr Michael Armstrong |
| Larry Scarborough | Claude Harmon Garrett IV |
| 14 Donald T Hayes | Portia D Robinson |
| Glenn Smith | Joseph L Rotunda |
| 15 Brian Fox | Michelle Masters Spruiell |
| 16 A Jon Empey | 29 John D Moris |
| 19 Derek M K Valz | 30 Mr Mark Curtis Newman |
| 22 Mark Ward | |
| 23 Erica L Poole | |
| Donald Goodman Stuart | |



Hello Region 6,

-by Dan Wilterding, RVC Region 6

The AMC met again in December, this time in New Orleans and in conjunction with NORGY -- the RG put on as a joint effort of the Baton Rouge and New Orleans Mensas. The hotel was nice -- down in the French Quarter just a short walk from Bourbon Street or Harrah's casino -- the food was quite good and the company of Mensans was excellent. The '05 AG (put on by the same two groups) should be quite a shindig.

An ongoing discussion at AMC meetings involves SIGs and risk management (not to be confused with risk elimination). Issues include how to address non-Mensan participation in SIGs and the legal liability of a member or the organization if and when problems arise. Also on the risk management plate is the matter of processes and procedures for dealing with minors with regards to activities of all sorts. Those of you participating in national SIGs or Mensa activities that include children please be aware that changes may be coming soon.

A more recent continuing discussion concerns ProxyQuest. Approximately \$45,000 has been allotted for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004; more will be allocated in what is expected to be an already stressed budget next year for the period between April 1 and June 30. Please -- satisfy any concerns that you may have about this matter and submit your proxy so that we can spend our dues money in ways that have a more immediately positive impact on our enjoyment of Mensa.

One of the more active local groups in Region 6 is Arkansas Mensa. They have set up an email list that has a large base of correspondents and a wide range of discussions. Their enthusiasm is high and they don't let differing points of view get in the way of being friends. It's been refreshing and a distinct pleasure to lurk on that list. Thanks to all of you.

Comments, anyone?

Dan Wilterding - RVC6

rvc6@us.mensa.org dtwtech@swbell.net

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Howdy To!

-submitted by Geri Neemidge

☛ David Adams

Three years ago David married his wife Kelly, moved from Arlington, TX to Austin, and started work for Motorola Semiconductor Products Sector. He was recently laid off from Motorola and is currently looking for another opportunity to use his skills and experience as a Semiconductor Test Engineer.

Kelly and David have no children yet, but they plan to. They have no pets other than the goldfish in the outdoor pond and fountain that's built into their patio. Their main hobbies are athletic activities like cycling, inline skating, and rock climbing.

David is also into some automotive hobbies. He has a show car (which is for sale) as well as a Miata and he's a member of the local Tejas Miata club. David has aspirations of getting into autocross next year.

Finally, David is an inventor. He has an invention ready to file, but needs advice on filing it with the patent office. David would love to meet other inventors in the group.

Kelly is a singer who enjoys her part on the praise team at their local church. She is starting her own business so that she can work from home when they start raising children.

David joined Mensa mainly in hopes that it will help his job search by increasing his personal network.

☛ Juli Eivens

Juli is married to Craig and they have one son, Parker, who is 3 years old. Juli is a dentist and owns a practice in North Austin called Advanced Smiles Dental. Her hobbies are anything having to do with the Arts. Juli decided to join Mensa to meet some really great people.

☛ David Gilder

David is engaged and lives with three cats. He is the lead developer for a local software company. In his spare time, David is an avid reader. He also enjoys photography and online video games. David joined Mensa because it sounded like an interesting organization, especially the special interest groups.

☛ Michelle Jordan

Michelle is 35 years old and divorced for about 4 years and she has two beautiful little girls - ages 9 and 7.

Michelle is the Chief Financial Officer for the Texas

Department of Agriculture. She has about 15 years in the field of finance with most of that experience being with the State of Texas. She has also worked for TDCJ, the Juvenile Probation Commission and the Comptroller's Office.

In her free time, Michelle enjoys oil painting and writing (she recently completed a children's book which she is trying to get published). Other interests include darts, NTN and Karaoke. Michelle loves to read non-fiction of all kinds and has a specific interest in Theories of Everything.

Her personal motto is "I would rather regret the things I've done rather than the things I didn't do". Michelle joined Mensa with the hope of meeting people with similar interests and intellectual pursuits.

☛ Scott McAfee

Scott and his wife, Kathryn, live in Tarrytown in a small cottage home with their antique cat Margot. They have no kids yet. Scott works as a creative director at a small ad agency called SWG&M. Accounts he works on include Fuddruckers, Shell Oil and SBC. Scott originally moved to Austin for GSD&M where he worked for 9 years. Kathryn is a musician and teaches voice lessons.

Scott is a recreational runner, and in addition to training with a Runtex group he enters various races - the latest two being the New York Marathon, and the Motive Half Marathon, here in Austin.

☛ Greg Sedbrook

Greg's background is very diverse. He has dabbled in a balance, and freedom. Greg has worked at various jobs as long as he could learn things: medical electronics, construction, maintenance for Lockheed aircraft, inspector and repairman for locomotives.

Greg has a keen interest in cultural anthropology and he has taught courses on creativity and problem solving.

☛ Michael Swanzy

Michael is an aerospace engineering graduate student at Texas A&M focusing on dynamics and controls of spacecraft. He is originally from Fredericksburg. Michael is 24, enjoys sports, the outdoors, and reading, and he does not have any pets.



Silver Service Award Recipients

-by John Neemidge, Past President

One of the ways a local group president can recognize volunteers is via the Silver Service Award. These awards are given at the local group president's discretion to those who have made a strong ongoing contribution to the group. This year I'm awarding four Silver Service Awards to people who've made contributions in many different ways.

The first award goes to Helen Siders. A relative newcomer to Lonestar Mensa, Helen has involved herself in the group in many ways. She's entering her second term as a Member At Large, has taken over Circulation Manager duties, has organized a number of picnics and outings, is very active on the LSM chat list, was Volunteer Coordinator at Lonestar V, and in general has plunged herself into group activities.

Second, I'm recognizing Rachael Stewart. Rachael got involved with Lonestar Mensa after meeting us at a Library Book Sale and has been active ever since. For the past few years she's been our Newsletter Editor, putting in many hours a month producing the newsletter. She's also volunteered at many events -- book sales, Lonestar's, holiday parties, and many other things, and she's been host of GenX Games Night and Movie Night.

The third and fourth awards both go to longtime Lonestar Mensans, who've been heavily involved with the group since before Geri and I moved here in 1996. First off, Kelly Wagner. Kelly has been Games Night host for many years, as well as host for many Holiday Parties and other events. She's been Treasurer as well, has made four raffle quilts for Lonestar's as well as a quilt square this year, has been local Scholarship Chair many times, has been a proctor, and much more.

Last, but certainly not least, Sam Waring. Sam is our current Testing Coordinator and a current proctor and is training a new group of proctors. In the past, Sam was our Circulation Manager for many years. He's been Vice President, Newsletter Editor, and a frequent event host and volunteer, plus very likely a number of other things that I don't even know about.

This year's Silver Service Award recipients are a diverse group, each of whom has been very active and has contributed to the group in many ways. I hope you'll join me in giving recognition to their contributions and thanking them for their time and effort.

Having the Ladies to Lunch

-by Jane Thompson

The three African-American ladies, all in their sixties, were dressed in their best. They wore sensible shoes, their best dresses, little hats with veils, and white cotton gloves as they walked from the bus stop up the tree-shaded walk to our house that hot Saturday afternoon in the early 1960s. The neighbors stared in true astonishment from their porches and as they watered their lawns.

My great-grandfather owned a big horse farm in Kentucky during the Civil War. He handled the war in a practical way; he was in a border area and whenever either army threatened he had his slaves move the horses to the woods, then swore that the last troop through had taken his horses and his slaves had run off. He made it through the war with horses and slaves intact. At the war's end, he told his slaves they were free to go, but if they wanted to stay they could work for room and board; he would pay wages when he was able. They all stayed; the farm was their home, too.

My grandmother was born in 1876. Her nannies were black; she was taught to cook truly Southern dishes (check out the NTM website under "Boring Stories" for two of her recipes) and to sew beautifully by former slaves. She didn't get much formal education, after all, she was female and this was Kentucky, whose Board of Education had a motto: "Thank God for Arkansas!" She got three months of schooling for six years and basically learned to read, write, and cipher. She also imbibed the prevailing idea that blacks were inherently inferior; no white person who owned slaves could believe otherwise, for how could he or she own human beings as slaves unless he or she harbored that belief? And, of course, she learned the steps to the intricate social caste system of blacks and whites.

But she also learned to be a gracious Southern lady. That entailed treating everyone, black or white, with courtesy and in accordance with the golden rule. She continued her education on her own the rest of her life, through reading and keeping up with events. And she learned tremendous life lessons. When she was sixteen, she eloped with a charming man who promised her the moon but gave her a sod hut on the spare Oklahoma plains, three children, and grief. He taught her to rely on herself when women were supposed to depend on a man; to stand on her own two feet and support her children herself. Later she married another man who gave her four more children and uncertainty. Again, she was responsible for herself and the children. And, of course, she developed a great sense of humor about the vagaries of life.

My grandmother learned to depend on other women for love

and support. She had a tremendous circle of women friends and loyal customers; and she never lost a daughter-in-law. If her son was foolish enough to divorce his wife, that didn't mean that she had to cut off relations with a woman she had learned to love. When one of her sons died, his widow brought her fiance to Mary before she remarried; she wasn't about to take the plunge without my grandmother's approval of her chosen.

In the 60s the Civil Rights Revolution began. My grandmother followed it closely in the newspaper and it made her think. By now she was 85; a little old to be changing her attitudes, one might believe. But change them she did. She discussed the issues with my father and mother and began to believe that the ideas she was raised with in the last century were not right. And she felt that she had wronged people.

In the teens and twenties, Mary Thompson owned a shop in Oklahoma City where anyone who was anybody came to have her clothes made. My grandmother employed three black women who sewed with her to keep up with the demand. She felt that she had paid them the prevailing wage and treated them fairly but--following the social customs of the time, she always ate lunch separately from her employees. Now she felt guilty about treating them so badly.

She told my mother she had to make it up to them. She wrote each of them a note inviting them and we had the ladies to lunch--long before it was customary to invite African-Americans to one's home socially. The neighbors were agog. But my grandmother felt much better; she felt that she had righted a wrong she had done her employees. Not much of a step in the Civil Rights Revolution--or was it?

What's Happening in JANUARY

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.

ExComm Meeting

DATE, TIME, and LOCATION TBA.

Meeting details will be posted to the lsm-announce email list. Contact Karen Werner at (512) 291-4677 to get an item on the agenda. All members welcome.

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, 6 January

6:00pm

Austin Public Library

University Hills Branch

4721 Loyola Lane, Austin

Please see the announcement on page 4 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, 21 January

7:00pm

Barnes & Noble Café

4909 W. Waco Dr., Waco

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

Georgetown Games Night

Saturday, 17 January

7:00pm

Betty Dougherty's House

129 Sunflower, Sun City, Georgetown

(512) 864-1582

The Georgetown Mensans are hosting a monthly games and

conversation night at the home of Betty Dougherty in Sun City on Saturday, January 17th, cohosted by Brian Corcoran. Bring a food item to share and BYOB. Smoking outside. All Mensa members and their guests are welcome to enjoy the challenges and good company. No kids or pets please. We hope to see some of our Temple and Waco brethren who might otherwise find Austin to be a bit far to travel.

From Austin, go north on I-35 to exit 261A. Stay on access road to Williams Drive. Turn left (west) on Williams Drive (FM 2338) and proceed to Sun City (about 6 miles). (From Waco going south, take exit 262.) At the light, turn right onto Del Webb Blvd. and go about 1 1/2 miles. (Watch your speed and for golf carts.) After you cross a bridge (there's a blinking light right before the bridge), turn right on Whispering Wind. The 2nd left, opposite a Speed Limit 30 sign, is Dan Moody. Turn left on Dan Moody and wind up and around to Sunflower at the top of the hill. Turn right on Sunflower and go to the 3rd house on the right - #129 is on the garage. Parking in the drive and on the street is OK. Any questions, call 864-1582.

Fold & Sticker

Thursday, 22 January

(at TGIT)

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

Potluck SIG & Games Night

Saturday, 24 January

6:00pm

Kelly Wagner & Steve Harsch's Home

1001 E. Riverside, Austin

(512) 443-9650

Theme: Hot food - we leave the meaning of "hot" up to you! Please call ahead to let us know you're coming and what you plan to bring.

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.

January

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------|------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 Monthly Meeting | 7 | 8 TGIT | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 TGIT | 16 | 17 Georgetown Games Night |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Waco Area Mensa | 22 TGIT | 23 | 24 Austin Games Night |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 TGIT | 30 | 31 |

2004

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