

# Armadillo Literary Gazette

A Publication of Lonestar Mensa

Volume XXXI Number 11

November 2004



## **Woman with Yellow Hair**

painted by Fred Campillo (Member, Artist, Math Teacher, Retired Naval Officer)

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Please submit ads to the newsletter editor.



# Essay

-by *Walter Stewart*

The weather is getting cooler. Passion though seems to become more enflamed among the few with causes – the rest of the populace, after so much rhetoric and countless denunciations has become largely apathetic. Merely being perceived as belonging to a specific demographic that is ‘owned’ by the opposition is enough to be verbally abused spit on and possibly assaulted. Gangs of activists with ‘uniforms’ or badges marking party affiliation roam the streets targeting the ‘opposition’ – both property and person.

Some might read the above and think that I am describing a time and place almost 70 years ago and an ocean away. But no – I am not describing Nazi Germany in the days leading up to the ‘night of breaking glass’ (krystallnacht), but rather America in the fall of 2004 leading up to the presidential elections.

The comparisons are valid. Anyone who openly displays a party preference may find themselves subject at any time to abuse from the oppositions partisans. This may range from merely having the object displaying the preference vandalized (cars keyed, lawns toilet papered, house spray-painted) to physical assaults. These turn exceptionally vicious when the party activist feels that you represent a demographic of the electorate that they OWN – at that point the perception is that of a traitorous scum, not fit to share space on the planet with. Brownshirts may not march in step and display military-type structuring but black garbed and masked gangs who swear their allegiance to a particular party and it’s philosophies openly commit property crimes and then proudly proclaim them as justified and honorable actions against the opposition.

This is exactly the same type of terrorism that existed in Nazi Germany during the years of confusion leading up to Hitler’s seizing of power. The Nazis, Communists and other parties used threats, fear and intimidation to force people to ‘toe the line’ they wanted sociologically. A few examples ‘pour les autres’ – for the others – and then agitprop (agitation propaganda) to make sure they understand the lesson and do, as they should.

Like Germany in those dark days, the average citizen is unhappy about the polarization to extremes that has occurred. If it were possible to take one side or the other to task for the situation, it would be less frustrating – but the true reality is that each side has its excesses and faults. The police are caught in the middle in many cases. Both sides are quick to label them as ineffectual when the worst

happens – yet the parties are responsible for the atmosphere where ‘the end justifies the means’ which promotes acts that the police must respond to. And if they fall into that trap – responding – then they are labeled as the partisan forces, thugs, storm troopers – of the other side!

The most disturbing historical parallel is the entrance of organized religion into the fray. Religion, combined or closely involved with government has resulted in some of the bloodiest, nastiest, and most embarrassing moments for the entire race. If anything, recent events have underscored the absolute genius of this country’s founders when they dictated the religion MUST remain separated from state. Countries that do this are free and prosperous. Countries that don’t – well, there is always the Middle East to look at for a fast comparison.

So far, the warring parties have not killed, or seriously injured anyone in their zeal – but as things approach the point of conflict, the schwehrpunkt, I feel that it is quite likely to take place. At which point a martyr will be born, a ‘Horst Wessel’. What then?

The most dangerous and disturbing result is the overall reduction of political debate and discussion. Yes, the ‘talking heads’ the pundits who analyze and interpret everything (and incidentally try to tell the vast multitudes just what they should think and do) still churn out an incredible mass of spin and counter-spin ad infinitum. But the average Johan on the street discusses politics only in the broadest of terms (if at all) except with friends whose thoughts he shares. Only the more combative and partisan attempt to convert (with near missionary zeal and fervor) and they are discounted due to that fervor. People politely nod and break conversation as quickly as possible. Gone are the days when folks could calmly, politely, and candidly mention the party leadership’s flaws and strengths. Now the risk is entirely too great that you will run into a partisan who will immediately denounce you as an opposition member – or worse – accuse you of heresy and treason.

Standing in the no man’s land between the extremes, I find myself strangely detached from the warring parties. Neither seems to realize that by continuing down this path one of them WILL lose. The other will win, and both sides in their self-righteousness think it will be them. Both sides’ ideologues promise milk and honey if their side prevails. But just in the last century we have a score or more failed examples to show that it isn’t so. Even more disturbing are the examples of Germany, Japan and Russia. Are we as a people so truly naive to believe that there is a large benevolent super-power that would come in and rescue us

from our stupidity? Or that an internal war would not leave this country a ruined and depopulated shell – a perfect target for foreign adventurism?

Both sides should step back and take a serious look at the consequences of their actions – short and long term. Win or lose. Accept them. And adjust their postures and doctrines accordingly. ‘My way or nothing for anyone’ is NOT an acceptable path. Nor is constant sniping and trying to trip up the other side so that nothing gets accomplished. If not, well, history shows that the people will accept a strong leader rather than dither. The only question will be: what type?



## A Word to the Wise

*-by Karen Werner, President*

IT'S ELECTION TIME. VOTE EARLY AND VOTE OFTEN. Lonestar Mensans have two elections coming up. First, the biggie, November 2, 2004. Get out there and vote. With early voting, if you have an opinion and you care who is elected, it's as convenient as going to the grocery store. Second, this month's newsletter contains a ballot for election of members to the Lonestar Mensa Executive Committee. This is the first contested election since I've been in Austin in 1997 (and long before, according to my sources). While candidates are unopposed for President, Vice-President and Treasurer, there are four candidates for the three Member at Large positions. Vote for three of the four. Also, you can submit a write-in vote for any candidate for any position.

There are two new events on this month's calendar, in addition to last month's addition of a GenX Pub Crawl. Check out the What's Happening section of this issue to get details on Hump Day Happy Hour and Poker Night.

It's coming up on "The Holidays." For a predictably good time, go to Dallas for their RG over Thanksgiving weekend. The Christmas Party will be at my house. More details to follow.

See you soon.

## Hello Region 6!

*-by Dan Wilterding, RVC Region 6*

Thanksgiving is close upon us -- the aromas and tastes of turkey & cornbread dressing, glazed ham with pineapple, sweet 'taters and cranberries are in our not-too-distant future. Complementing these delightful experiences is the RG in Dallas -- The Feast of Pleasures and Delights XXV. That's right, it's #25. Maybe there'll be prizes for whoever has been to the most, or who's had to travel the furthest to get to them. Most likely the prize will be in being there, enjoying the companionship and the programs, the hospitality and the chance to be a part of this Region6 tradition. One thing is certain: only by attending will you know for sure.

Life is good.

Comments, anyone?

Dan Wilterding - RVC6

[rv6@us.mensa.org](mailto:rv6@us.mensa.org)

[dtwtech@swbell.net](mailto:dtwtech@swbell.net)

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

504 West Atchley Drive

Granbury, Texas 76048

Don't forget this!!

In Dallas:

Feast of Pleasures and Delights XXV

November 25-28 2004 \$50 till November 15, \$55 after

Contact: Carol Hilson, 9413 Shipman St, Rowlett, Texas

75088 972-475-9327 [C\\_Hilson@msn.com](mailto:C_Hilson@msn.com)

... or this --

In New Orleans:

MensAGumbo

Fun for Both Sides of Your Brain!

July 6-10, 2005

Join us at one of the most spectacular locations on earth for an Annual Gathering designed to satisfy your every want, need, and expectation. Expect speakers beyond belief, astounding entertainment, and more! Adult pre-registration rates are \$70 by 12/31; \$75 by 4/8; \$80 by 7/1; and \$90 after 7/1. Adult daily rates are \$20 per calendar day by 7/1 and \$25 per calendar day when purchased onsite. Young Mensan registration rates are free for ages 4 and under; \$30 for ages 4 - 12; and \$50 ages 13 - 20. Young Mensan daily rates are \$10 per calendar day by 7/1 and \$17 per calendar day when purchased onsite.

Contact: AG2005, American Mensa, Ltd., 1229 Corporate Dr. West, Arlington TX 76006-6103. Online registration at [http://ag.us.mensa.org/registration/ag\\_reg1.php](http://ag.us.mensa.org/registration/ag_reg1.php)

## **September ExComm Meeting Minutes**

*-submitted by Margaret Wofford, Vice President*

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 5:50pm.

Karen announced that Paul Anderson will chair the nominating committee and that Lise Waring and Ron Theriault have agreed to serve on the committee.

Margaret presented the RG financial statements. Although there are still a few pending items, it appears that the RG made a modest profit. After discussion, moved, Janet, seconded, Helen, to dedicate 100% of the RG profit to the scholarship fund. Motion passed unanimously.

Kathie presented the July financial statements.

Attendees agreed that there should be an RG in 2005. Karen currently anticipates that John will chair the 2005 RG. Attendees discussed whether an appointment of an RG chair for 2006 should occur at a date different than that for other appointees, and it was agreed it would be desirable for any future chair to be appointed soon so that he/she can work with John over the next year and get a feel for what RGs entail." Helen also made suggestions for organization of the next RG. Attendees discussed the possibility that attendance might be improved by moving the RG to a different holiday weekend and decided to stay with the Labor Day weekend for 2005. Further discussion is planned on the topic of RG chair terms and appointments at the October ExComm meeting.

Janet is now qualified to proctor test sessions and will get test materials.

Attendees discussed conducting a member survey in the near future.

Helen and John will collaborate on the postal form that must be published in the October 'Dillo and will get it to Rachael in time for inclusion in the issue.

Karen adjourned the meeting at 6:40pm.

## **October ExComm Meeting Minutes**

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

Karen convened the meeting at 6:00pm.

Karen reported that the Mensa Research Journal, which has previously been provided free by National, will now cost \$21 for three issues. Attendees debated the merits of subscribing. Given the lack of interest in the publication by attendees, we will not be subscribing at this time.

Karen reminded attendees that since the next monthly meeting is November 8 and the election of local officers for 2005 concludes November 15, that results of the election will not be known at the monthly meeting.

The November 8 ExComm meeting will be at Souper Salads on Anderson Lane.

Kathie presented the September financial statements.

Karen asked Margaret to update the RG financial statements so that the RG profit can be transferred to the scholarship fund.

Karen reported that Janet Kres will be proctoring a test session on October 16. Danny South will be observing as part of his qualification process for becoming the next certified proctor.

Karen adjourned the meeting at 6:35pm.

## **November Monthly Meeting**

The November Monthly Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 9, 2004, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the North Village Library, 2139 W. Anderson Lane. This month's speaker was recommended to me by one of our members who has heard her speak. Thanks, Ron.

This month's speaker is Treyce Benavidez. Ms. Benavidez has 16 years' experience in Handwriting Analysis and Handwriting Formation Therapy. She has been featured on radio and television talk shows, as well as in the written media. She has trained various law enforcement agencies, including the Wisconsin Association of Public Assistance Fraud, Great Lakes Gang Investigators Association, Southern States Correctional Association, International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts, and many others.

Ms. Benavidez' experience includes work in locating missing children, unsolved crimes, predicting workplace violence, and identifying drug users. She has done all of this through anonymous handwriting analysis. She claims she can analyze other personality traits such as honesty and faithfulness solely through this process.

This promises to be an interesting talk. Please come out and learn what your own handwriting reveals about you to others.

## What's Happening in November?

### 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 38<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> Streets. Central Market is the anchor store. Central Market Café is adjacent to Central Market on the south side. We meet upstairs.

### GenX Pub Crawl

Saturday, November 6

7:00pm

Host: Danny South

(512) 670-3470

dsouth@stewart.com

7:00	Gingerman	304 W 4th
8:30	Fado	3rd and Lavaca
9:30	Bitter End	310 Colorado
10:30	Coppertank	5th and Trinity
11:30	Casino el Camino	517 E 6th

### ExComm Meeting

Tuesday, November 9

5:30pm

#### Souper! Salad!

2438 W. Anderson Ln, Austin

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

### Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, November 9

7:00pm

#### Austin Public Library, North Village Branch

2139 W. Anderson Lane, Austin

Please see page 6 for details.

### Poker Night

Saturday, November 13

7:00pm

#### Karen Werner's Home

9110 Curlew Drive

(512) 291-4677

Penny ante poker, BYOB. Bring snacks if you feel like it and have time. RSVP, if possible, so I'll know how many people to expect and how many to make appetizers for.

### Hump Day Happy Hour

Wednesday, November 17

6:00pm

Opal Divine's, 700 W. 6th and Rio Grande.

The hostess can tell you where we are. Let's hang out, kick back and observe Austin. Host: Karen Werner, (512) 291-4677.

### Waco Area Mensa Get-Together

Wednesday, November 17

7:00pm

#### Barnes & Noble Café

4909 W. Waco Dr., Waco

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

### Fold & Sticker

Thursday, November 18

(at TGIT)

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

### Potluck SIG & Games Night

Saturday, November 20

6:00pm

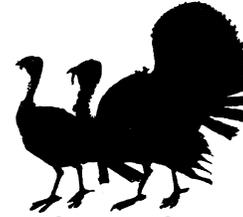
#### Kelly Wagner & Steve Harsch's Home

1001 E. Riverside, Austin

(512) 443-9650

November is Adults-only.

Theme: Empty the 'Fridge -- You've got to stock up for Thanksgiving dinner, right? Take those extra ingredients and toss something together. Please make the dishes low-sodium if possible. Salt shakers will be available. Please call and let us know what you're bringing! Thanks. 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.



## Membership Directory News

*-submitted by Howard Prince, AML InfoSys Director*

American Mensa's membership directory is now online in the Member Resources section of the AML Web site (<https://secure.us.mensa.org/members/index.php>).

Stored in the private area of our Web site, the member directory provides member contact information that members have released for publication in an online or printed directory. This release information has been collected via the Personal Data Questionnaire sent to members each year when they renew.

PLEASE NOTE, you'll need your member number and PIN/password to access this area of the Web site -- the Bulletin login information will NOT work for this specific member benefit!

Membership information is updated nightly (M-F), based on information on file at the National Office. If your information listed is incorrect, please update your contact information (</members/mymembership.php>), contact a Membership Services representative ([memberservices@americanmensa.org](mailto:memberservices@americanmensa.org)) or call (817) 607-0060 x199 8:30-5:00 CT M-F. If you have concerns about listing your contact information, please update your privacy responses (</members/only/pdq.php>), contact a Membership Services representative ([memberservices@americanmensa.org](mailto:memberservices@americanmensa.org)) or call (817) 607-0060 x199 8:30-5:00 CT M-F.

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**November**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 TGIT	5	6 GenX Pub Crawl
7	8	9 ExComm & Monthly Meeting	10	11 TGIT	12	13 Poker Night <i>Dillo Deadline</i>
14	15	16	17 Waco Mensa Happy Hour	18 TGIT <i>Fold &amp; Sticker</i>	19	20 Potluck and Games Night
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30				

**2004**