

Armadillo Literary Gazette

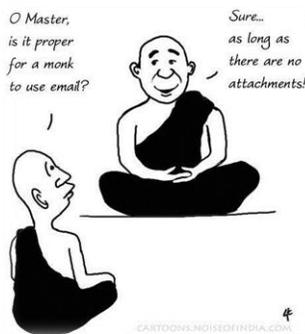
A Publication of *Lone Star Mensa*
Volume XXXIX
Number 9, September 2012



Editor: *Rose M. Berkowitz*
Managing Editor: *Don Drumtra*
Publisher: *Board of Officers*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Submitted By *Rose Berkowitz*



Did you know that:

- Since 9/11, the rules for non-profits have become much more extensive in all states, and are strictly enforced (to prevent things like terrorist money-laundering).
- American Mensa is incorporated as a non-profit organization in New York State,.
- All Mensa groups must abide by the rules imposed by New York State. (There is an 800+-page document covering these rules for organizations incorporated there.)
- Therefore Lone Star Mensa's bylaws must comply with these requirements.

Knowing the above should help you to understand some of the challenges our Board of Officers faces. You may have heard rumors about people leaving the board due to

in-fighting or other unpleasantness. Generally this is not the case, but rather that board member terms of office are specified in our bylaws and must be adhered to.

I've received input from some members in response to last month's editorial. (See "Letters to the Editor.") They cite what they think is wrong with our group, make suggestions as to what could be done to fix the problems (which have all been tried), or explain how busy you all are. This is not the first time we've heard this. But the fact remains that we only have a limited number of people left who are willing to do the work required to keep our group going.

Volunteering can be fun and rewarding. I enjoy being Editor—it's a great creative outlet. It can also sometimes be boring or frustrating, as can any position. But for me it's worth it to do something to help my fellow Mensans.

If you want this group to be more fun, YOU need to make it more fun. If you want to see changes made, YOU have to take the initiative. Otherwise I'm afraid we WILL eventually have to disband Lone Star Mensa.

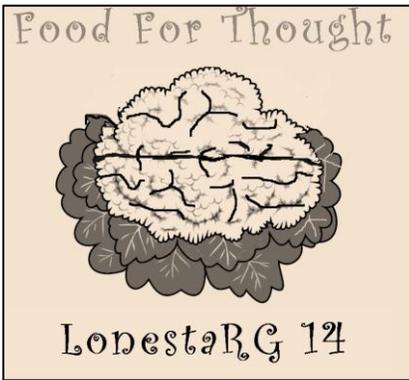
MEMBER MEETING

Submitted by *Rose M. Berkowitz, Editor*

September Meeting

For the Sept 10 meeting, Mensan Edward Gordon will speak on "Self-Publishing on a Shoestring"; he published his autobiography for free and will discuss how he did it. Also featured is Ricardo Turullols-Bonilla, friend of Mr. Gordon and another self-published author, who will discuss his proposal to "fix the world." Interested parties can preview his "Dialogics " proposal on YouTube at youtu.be/pjd15JaRHOE.

There's Still Time!



- *Planned speaker topics include Urban Agriculture, Nutrition, Aquaponics, the culinary arts, and other foodie topics*
- *Abundant hospitality, with meals, veggies, snacks, soda, beer, wine, margaritas*
- *Dance*
- *Many workshops*
- *Captivating company*
- *Crockpot Potluck and Scholarship Dessert Cook-off*
- *Tastings*
- *Games and contests*
- *Goodies and Prizes*

Feed your head at LonestarRG the 14th! We're planning a great weekend, Friday August 31st - Monday September 3rd, with speakers on foodie topics, games and workshops, and plenty of tasty treats in hospitality. We'll again be at the Wingate by Windham in Round Rock.

Registration is \$85 walk-in, and single-day rates: \$25 Fri, \$45 Sat, \$45 Sun, and \$15 Mon. Children 9-17 half price, 8 and under are free. To get a printable registration form, or for more information, see the web page at lsm.us.mensa.org/events/rq.

GREETINGS FROM YOUR NEW SYMPOSIA CHAIR

Submitted by Angela Adams

Hello, Lone Star Mensans! Look at your calendar, now back to LSM's calendar, now back at your calendar, now back to LSM's calendar. Sadly, your calendar isn't full, but if it stopped ignoring the second to last page of the Gazette and read the new and improved LSM calendar, it could actually be full of activities. Look down, back up – where are you? You're on a boat with the calendar your calendar could look like. What's in your hand? Back at LSM's calendar – it's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love. Look again, the tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your calendar looks like LSM's calendar. It's on a horse.

Greetings from your new Symposia Chair! My name is Angela Adams, and I hope you enjoyed my little spoof on that famous Old Spice commercial. Ok, I took a little literary license. The LSM calendar isn't totally full – yet. That's what I'm here to work on. My main duty as Sym Chair is to organize local social activities and get y'all interacting.

I've got some interesting things planned. Along with the usual TGIT, board and member meetings, Eclectic Eats and Seal and Label, I'm hoping to bring back Game Night and Movie Night. I've also been kicking around the idea of forming a Hobby Night and/or a Karaoke Night. GenX get-together, anyone?

I've got a small budget, and I need help spending it on activities with the most funtential. Please send me feedback – I want to hear from you! (If no one helps me out, I'll probably end up only scheduling things that my dog and I find interesting ... here we go—Amigurumi Night!) I also need help coming up with more original names for these activities. Shoot me an email or find me on Facebook.

Keep your eye on the Lone Star Mensa calendar over the next few months. Good things are on their way!

"You cannot compile a wit out of two half-wits." - Joe Orton [John Kingsley Orton]

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Mensa Regional and National Officers																																			
Elissa Rudolph American Mensa Chairman	Roger Durham Vice-Chairman (Region 6)																																		
Lone Star Mensa Board of Officers (The board also includes Standing Committee Chairmen listed below)																																			
John Neemidge Local Secretary 2012-2013 Senior Officer 2012-2014	Bryan Bloch Vice-President / Secretary Senior Officer 2011-2013																																		
Don Drumtra Treasurer Senior Officer 2011-2013	Aaron Legare Senior Officer 2012-2014																																		
Crockett Grabbe Senior Officer 2011-2013																																			
Douglas Yee Senior Officer 2012-2014 Chess Night Coordinator	Volunteers needed Contact John Neemidge Executive Advisor 2012-2013 One Senior Officer 2011-2013 One Senior Officer 2012-2014																																		
Communications Committee (newsletters, website, email lists, media relations, and advertising.)																																			
Paul Anderson Media Coordinator Publicity	Rose Berkowitz Newsletter Editor Calendar Editor																																		
Don Drumtra Circulation Coordinator (temporary)	Linda Edelstein Email Circulation Coordinator																																		
Geri Neemidge Facebook LSM Group Admin	John Neemidge eList Coordinator Web Contact																																		
Douglas Yee Webmaster Proofreader																																			
Ex Officio Web Content Providers <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 50%;">Webpages</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 50%;">Content Provider</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Website, Home Page, About LSM</td><td>Webmaster</td></tr> <tr><td>Join Mensa</td><td>Testing Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Scholarships</td><td>Scholarship Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Monthly Meeting, Topic Lists</td><td>Programs Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Comprehensive Calendar</td><td>Calendar Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Regional Gathering</td><td>RG Webmaster</td></tr> <tr><td>Contacts, Officers</td><td>Officer Coordinator</td></tr> <tr><td>Board of Officers</td><td>Secretary</td></tr> <tr><td>Standards</td><td>Records Manager/ Archivist</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Webpages	Content Provider	Website, Home Page, About LSM	Webmaster	Join Mensa	Testing Coordinator	Scholarships	Scholarship Coordinator	Monthly Meeting, Topic Lists	Programs Coordinator	Comprehensive Calendar	Calendar Coordinator	Regional Gathering	RG Webmaster	Contacts, Officers	Officer Coordinator	Board of Officers	Secretary	Standards	Records Manager/ Archivist	Ex Officio Proofreaders <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tbody> <tr><td>Managing Editor</td><td>Calendar Editor</td></tr> <tr><td>LocSec</td><td>Past LocSec</td></tr> <tr style="background-color: #fce4d6;"><td colspan="2">Volunteers Needed Contact John Neemidge or Don Drumtra</td></tr> <tr style="background-color: #fce4d6;"><td colspan="2">Communications Committee Chairman</td></tr> <tr style="background-color: #fce4d6;"><td>Advertising Coordinator</td><td>Historian.</td></tr> <tr style="background-color: #fce4d6;"><td>Circulation Coordinator</td><td>Photographer Coordinator</td></tr> <tr style="background-color: #fce4d6;"><td>ComComm Chairman</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Managing Editor	Calendar Editor	LocSec	Past LocSec	Volunteers Needed Contact John Neemidge or Don Drumtra		Communications Committee Chairman		Advertising Coordinator	Historian.	Circulation Coordinator	Photographer Coordinator	ComComm Chairman	
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Education Committee (gifted children and youth and scholarships)																																			
Michele Vaughan Gifted Children Coordinator	Claudia Harbert Scholarship Coordinator																																		
	Volunteers Needed Contact John Neemidge or Don Drumtra Chairman Education Funding Coordinator Education Publicity Coordinator																																		

Membership Committee (care of current and new members, awards, officer resources and development, and testing)	
Fred Goertz Chairman	Patsy Graham New Member Coordinator
Don Drumtra Officer Coordinator	Charles Wilson Proctor
Austin Meyer Testing Coordinator	Mike McCormick Proctor
Michael Tolbert Proctor	Volunteers needed Contact Fred Goertz or John Neemidge Awards Coordinator Current Member Coordinator
Symposia Committee (gatherings, events, parties, colloquia, and symposia)	
Angela Adams Chairman	Paul Anderson Symposia Publicity Coordinator
Bryan Bloch Southern LSM Coordinator	Aaron Rabushka Eclectic Eats Coordinator
	Volunteers needed Contact Angela Adams or John Neemidge or Games Night Coordinator Programs Coordinator Symposia (parties) Coordinator Area Coordinators for Waco, UT, Bryan
Independent and Special Officers	
Ron Edelstein Ombudsman Arbiter	Don Drumtra Records Manager/Archivist Reports and Data Coordinator
	Volunteers Needed Contact John Neemidge S. I. G. H. T Coordinator (S.I.G.H.T. is Services for Information, Guidance, and Hospitality for Travelers)
Lone Star Mensa Regional Gathering XIV Committee	
John Neemidge Co-Chairman (next year Ron Edelstein)	Geri Neemidge Co-Chairman (next year Linda Edelstein)
Committee Members: Patsy Graham , Registrar (temporary) Modelle Gibson , Hospitality (temporary) Don Drumtra , Treasurer (temporary)	Volunteers needed Contact <i>John</i> Various
Mind Games 2014 Committee	
Patsy Graham Chairman	Committee Members: John Neemidge Geri Neemidge
Website Working Group	
Patsy Graham Chairman	Committee Members: Webmaster--Douglas Yee Records Manager/Archivist--Don Drumtra

"Science has sometimes been said to be opposed to faith, and inconsistent with it. But all science, in fact, rests on a basis of faith, for it assumes the permanence and uniformity of natural laws - a thing which can never be demonstrated."-Tryon Edwards

A WORD TO THE WISE

Submitted by John Neemidge, LocSec

We have some news about the LSM Board this month. This year we've had a few positions vacant, due to unexpected moves and other events. Bryan Bloch, a long-time Mensan who's been on several other local group boards, has agreed to join our Board, and was elected to the position of Vice President/Secretary. Welcome Bryan! Also, Don Drumtra has taken on the Treasurer duties for this year as well--Thanks Don! We still have many ways to get involved; please come to a Board meeting or drop me a note if you're interested in helping out as a Board member or in many other ways. For example, any member can put an event on the calendar, and we encourage you to host something of interest to you.

One subject that's come up recently is the matter of 'cliquishness'. The problem that I see with that word, as a starting point for discussion, is that it turns into a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you think the group is cliquish, you won't try to get involved, feeling unwelcome. The people who are "in the clique", on the other hand, see that they're on their own; no one's joining them or trying to help out. It's hard to get around this; one can be outgoing, try to bring new people into the conversation, etc., but often people who've known each other for years make references to things new people can't know about, which makes them feel left out.

I really feel that we're not all that cliquish. Of the current Board members, some are long-term members and some are brand-new. The same is true for other officers. Our Hospitality Chair at the RG last year (and this year) was a brand-new member who didn't know anyone in the group very well when she volunteered. We do try to welcome everyone to events and we hope everyone has a great time. I hate to hear about anyone who came to something and left feeling unwelcome or unappreciated. I know it can happen, though; everyone's human and sometimes a topic of great interest to people who've known each other for years takes over the conversation, leaving new people out.



Maybe some of you have faced this in other groups and found some great answers. If so, drop me a note -- I'd enjoy hearing about your experiences. In any case, I want to encourage you, whether you're new, a long-time

member who hasn't been to anything in a while, or a member who came out and had a not-so-great time, to give another group event a try. If you can, give two or three events a try; everything has an off day sometimes. If you read this before LonestaRG, come out and join us. If not, try to make one of the bigger events, maybe the Holiday Party. We do want to meet you!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Who: Angela Adams



Member Since: April 2000
Current Location: Austin, Texas

Right now, I'm a stay-at-home mother of two kids, Isaac and Hannah. I'm the eternal student—currently, I am teaching myself piano,

kettle bells, and dog training—just to name a few topics. I have a B.S. in Psychology from Arizona State University, and I am planning to apply to medical school this year. I love all Asian cuisines, especially Korean food, and have been taking cooking classes at Whole Foods Market to satisfy one of my New Year's resolutions. In addition to being the new Symposia Chair for LSM, I also volunteer at Dell Children's Hospital and Austin Pets Alive! I have a handsome mutt named Max, and a lifelong love of guinea pigs (although I don't currently have any, due to the aforementioned handsome mutt). To relax, I like to game online (Xbox or PC), read science fiction, watch television, and work out.

FROM THE RVC—REPORT FROM THE AG

Submitted by Roger Durham, Region 6 RVC



With the Reno Annual Gathering in the rear-view mirror, preparations are getting into high gear for the Fort Worth AG in July 2013. Co-chairs Carol Hilson and Karen Brack, along with the rest of their team, are working overtime trying to keep track of

all the little details that go into the making of an AG. Speakers are being lined up, entertainment booked, tours arranged, and menus developed. If you plan to go (and I hope you do), make your hotel reservations soon, if not immediately, as the main hotel is filling up rapidly.

If you've never been to an AG, I urge you to take advantage of this one's proximity. Since we try to hold the AG in a different part of the country each year, in order to give everyone a chance to attend one in a nearby city from time to time, there won't be another one in our region for many years to come. As I've mentioned in this space before, after 2013 the next three AGs will be held in Boston, Louisville, and San Diego.

One good reason to attend an AG might be that it gives one an opportunity to sit in on a meeting of the

American Mensa Committee, Mensa's board of directors. Many members don't realize that AMC meetings are open to all members. You can't speak during the meeting, but you can listen to the debates and talk to the AMC members during breaks. That's not as important here in Region 6, of course, as in other parts of the country, since we have at least one and sometimes two meetings in the Dallas/Fort Worth area every year, due to the presence of the national office in Arlington, but few people visit the local AMC meetings. That's understandable, since the meetings here don't have any social events to accompany them.

When our meetings are held in conjunction with the Annual (or even a Regional) Gathering, though, you can watch the AMC for as long as you care to, then slip away to Hospitality or an interesting program. We do try to meet in conjunction with RGs whenever we can, although the AMC has a rule against meeting on holiday weekends, which rules out many of the larger RGs. Our December meeting this year, however, will be held in conjunction with the New Orleans RG, and I hope to see many of you there. Feel free to come by and observe the AMC meeting in New Orleans, or next summer in Fort Worth.

In the meantime, don't forget Lone Star Mensa's upcoming RG in Round Rock, just north of Austin, over the Labor Day weekend, and North Texas Mensa's RG in Dallas over Thanksgiving weekend. Check their respective websites for details.

SAVE THE DATE—HOLIDAY PARTY IN DECEMBER!

Submitted by John Neemidge

Geri and I were talking about Holiday Party locations and what we'd like to see in a party and came up with a recommendation. Our church, First Unitarian Church of Austin, has a large meeting room (Howson Hall) and a full kitchen available for rental. The church is located in central Austin (about a mile from Central Market North). There's plenty of parking, etc. The room seats about 100, depending on what tables we use and in what configuration, so there'll be room to mingle and talk.

Our thought is to do this like the parties we used to do at Zilker Clubhouse. We can get there early and decorate some (if necessary—the church will have decorated for the holidays). We'll serve primarily pre-made finger foods from Sam's Club/Costco, drinks (including wine/champagne and maybe beer), and maybe a larger food (turkey, ham, etc.) but not structured as a meal, to encourage people to move around and talk. The group will absorb the facility cost, with a \$5 charge per person. Same children discounts as at the RG.

We'll plan on Saturday, Dec 15, 7-10 pm.



AUGUST BOARD MINUTES

Submitted by Don Drumtra, Secretary pro tem

The August regular meeting of the Lone Star Mensa board of officers convened at 7:30 PM, Thursday, Aug 2, 2012 at Carver Public Library, Rooms 2-3, 1161 Angelina, Austin, TX. Attending were Bryan Bloch, Don Drumtra, Crockett Grabbe, John Neemidge, and Douglas Yee. The board adopted the agenda and the minutes of the July regular board meeting as printed on page 5 of the August Armadillo Literary Gazette as amended to correct the dates in the first paragraph. The amended minutes, agenda, referenced written reports, and other documents related to the meeting are available on the LSM Website. Paper copies are available on request.

Reports:

- LocSec: John reported on the LocSec meeting at the AG, emphasizing the results of the recent survey of members. He plans to provide information on the survey to the membership in the future.
- Treasurer: The board adopted the Treasurer's Reports for the end of July as posted on the Website.
- ComComm: Don reported that the August newsletter went out on schedule.
- LonestarRG 2012 Committee: John reported that RG about half of the speakers are lined up. Registration is slightly below previous years at this time.
- Website Working Group: Douglas is waiting for the designer's latest proposal.
- Mind Games Committee: Patsy has not yet received the 2013 bid package from the national office.
- Action Plan Status: No new action has been reported. The latest report is posted on the Website.

Actions:

- Confirmed the email vote to adopt the LocSec's recommendation to hold the Christmas Party 7-10 PM, Saturday, Dec 15, at Howson Hall of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin on 4700 Grover Ave. at a rental price of \$352 from the Symposia budget. Current planning includes a \$5 admission, both catered and LSM provided refreshments, and LSM activities and decorations.
- Accepted Don's resignation from the board as Past LocSec. The vacant position automatically reverts to Executive Advisor. The LocSec may fill this position with the advice and consent of the board.
- Confirmed the LocSec's appointment of Bryan and Don to fill the remaining terms of office of two of the three vacant 2011-2013 board positions.
- Elected Bryan to be LSM Vice-President and Secretary of the Board.
- Elected Don to be LSM Treasurer.
- Established the 2013 Lone Star Mensa Regional Gathering (LonestarRG) Special Committee and confirmed the LocSec's appointment of Linda and Ron Edelstein as Co-chairmen. Approved the dates of Friday, Aug 30 to Monday, Sep 2, 2013 at the Wingate by Wyndham Inn conference facility in Round Rock, TX. The board plans to approve tentative themes by email vote before the 2012 RG and the final theme at the September Board meeting.
- Discussed actions that might be taken concerning two letters to the ALG Editor in response to her editorial on page 1 of the August ALG. The board noted that some of the points the writers made duplicated those addressed in the Member Concerns Action Plans. Some board members suggested that perhaps some of the recent changes in LSM may not have been noted by the writers. The board decided to wait for additional responses to Rose's editorial and feedback from the RG and to continue the discussion at the September 6 board meeting. Meanwhile, the board encouraged its members to participate in the ALG discussion by submitting their own opinions in letters to the Editor for publication.

Announcements:

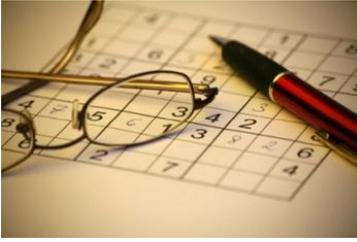
- The next regular monthly Board meetings are scheduled for 7:30-8:30 PM Thursday, Sep 6 and Oct 4 at the Carver Branch Library.
- The next regular membership meetings are scheduled for Aug 13, and Sep 10, 6:45-8:15 PM at the Carver Branch Library.
- The next test session is scheduled for Saturday, Sep 1 at the LSM RG scheduled for Aug 31-Sep 3.
- The next RG Committee meeting is scheduled for 6-8 PM, Sunday, Aug 5 at Café Express SW of N. Lamar at 35th St.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

YOUR SUDOKU PUZZLE

Weekly Extremes, sudoku.org.uk

By Douglas Yee



4				1				8
		3	7		2	9		
	2						1	
	5				8			7
								2
7			6					4
							6	
		4	5		6	3		
9				8				5

Each Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, and every 3x3 square.

In other news, it has recently been shown that 17 is the minimal number of starting clues required for a valid Sudoku:

youtu.be/MlyTq-xVkQE

POETRY CORNER

LOTS OF ORANGE

By Lynn Herrick

watching the tangerine sneakers
walking up ahead of me
except for the sneakers
everything on her
and the guy with her
is all grey
more orange running past me
big Day-Glo orange stripes
on darkgrey runshoes
pushing button to cross street
watching red stoplight
past the light
to feathery trees silhouetted
against copperorange sunset
lots of orange tonight



RECYCLED

By Rose M. Berkowitz

Here since first the earth was formed,
Descended from the heavens,
This single drop—
Now as shining dew upon a rosebush, has
Coursed through the veins of dinosaurs,
Brought nourishment to virgin forests,
Soothed the forehead of a fevered child,
Tinkled in brooks and roared in oceans,
Dissolved effluent, and soap suds,
Revived a thirsty field of wheat,
Joined in clouds pearly or thunderous,
Boiled for tea, frozen for snowflakes.
We turn on the tap, we lift our faces
And there it is, life-giving,
Forming a rainbow in the sun.

WEB SITE LINKS

(From Rose Berkowitz) If you have a favorite web site that you'd like to share with your fellow Lone Star Mensans, send the link to me with a brief description and I'll publish it in a future newsletter. To get you started, here are some of my favorites:

The Geek's Guide to the Galaxy
Kurzweil Accelerating Intelligence
Jinni – Watch What You Wish For
The Splendid Table

geeksguideshow.com/
kurzweilai.net/
jinni.com/
splendidtable.publicradio.org/

(From Linda Edelstein) These online tests are simple as you want to make them, and fun. Unfortunately, I found they tested my agility with the keypad much better than they did my ability to do math quickly, as I could do the problems in my head much faster than I could key in the answers accurately. Also, if you try a test with more than one math function (division and subtraction in particular), the small size of the signs makes it take longer to recognize and do the problems. Still, an interesting experience: **Web Math Minute** webmathminute.com/default.asp

GOT AN E-BOOK READER? WANT FREE E-BOOKS?

By Ron Edelstein

E-book readers attract a variety of reactions, from those who are completely enamored of them to those who disdain them and want only dead tree books, and everything in between. I started out as the latter and now am up towards the other end of the scale. There are still some books I want in paper, but for the “read once” types, an e-book is just right. For collectibles, there is nothing to beat a first edition or an autographed copy of a fine old (or even new) book, but if all you want to do is just read it and probably not come back to it, you can just bit recycle and take up no space on your bookshelf.

Having said that, what about cost? If you like the New York Times Best Seller list, you are going to have to pay for it. But if you are satisfied with books of somewhat greater vintage, or old classics, most are available for free if you know where to look. The following list is nowhere near comprehensive, but it should provide enough reading material to keep even a Mensan busy for quite some time.

Here are a few that I've used and find interesting. These ought to keep you browsing and reading for a while. Not all the books in all of these are free, but they all have some free books available, and of course others that you can get if you pay. Most of the free books are old ones out of copyright, but some, as at Baen, are new authors trying to break in and get some publicity, or one of a series to entice you to pay for the rest of the series.



amazon.com/s/?node=2245146011	This is the free page on Amazon (yes, Amazon DOES give away some free books, mostly old classics out of copyright), Supports Kindle and Kindle Fire.
free-ebooks.net	Supports both Android and Apple and also available in several other popular formats, so just about any e-reader is accommodated.
ebooks.com/	Mostly paid books but some free ones if you search. All popular e-reader formats supported
fictionwise.com/home.html	A Barnes & Noble company, supports nearly all formats. Mostly paid books but has one section of freebies. Requires registration (Free).
baenebooks.com/c-1-free-library.aspx	Sci-Fi from the well-known Sci-Fi publisher. Mostly paid, but has some freebies.*
http://is.gd/AYhugu	Audible Books--download and burn to CD to play--not free, but fairly cheap.
audiobooksforfree.com/screen_main.asp	Free audio books...download and burn to CD's to play.
free-ebooks.net/ampersand/	Division of Free-E-books, above, for academic text books.

* If you are into alternate histories, may I recommend the series by Eric Flint which begins with “1631” (available here but not free). Two of the follow-on books, “1632” and “1633” are both available for free. If you are also a European history nut—as I am—you will find these fascinating reading.

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS*

- 3 Harold A Cromwell
- 5 Angel Sater
- 7 Dan Allen Flanagan
- 9 Barbara Erskine Bartlett
- 10 Tara Elizabeth Todd
- 11 Michael Martino
- 13 Karyn R Brown
- 14 Alexander P Keith
- 14 Ross A Williams
- 16 William Darrell Cheek
- 16 Karen Jager
- 17 Mary E Dougherty
- 17 Dana Lynn Holland
- 18 Capt Howard A Konetchy
- 21 Brad E Rhoden
- 23 Linda Edelstein
- 23 John C Foster
- 23 Robert E Kiefer
- 24 Frederick Charles Bothwell III
- 24 Allen Vorwerk
- 25 Katherine G Blair
- 26 Lynn Herrick
- 28 Vaughn E Akins

- 30 Shea Hillis
- 30 Melissa Vanessah Melton

NEW MEMBERS—WELCOME!

- Richard E Anaya
- John Jertson
- Scott A Johnson
- Hayden Mays
- Andres Naranjo
- Austin Taylor
- Elizabeth Taylor

JUST MOVED IN—HI NEIGHBOR!

- William Allan Morita
- Ellen Ruth Shaffer CPA

WELCOME BACK--MISSED YOU!

- Jonathan P Grabert

GOODBYE—WE WISH YOU WELL

- Travis J Mason
- Ann C True



**SEPTEMBER
ANNIVERSARIES**

MEMBER FOR 45 YEARS

Philip D Ryals

MEMBER FOR 5 YEARS

Amy Arrant

**Note: We can't acknowledge your birthday if you've restricted that information in your member profile. To check your member profile, log in to the AML website.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mensa is not alone in its volunteer & membership challenges. Churches and fraternal organizations (e.g., Freemasonry) are, I believe, experiencing the same situations. My mom sees the same thing in groups she is a part of. I also see it in "extra-curricular" activities at work. What's happening? Or what's *not* happening? I relate it to three themes:

1) Value proposition: having a clear statement of benefits for those participating, and a commitment to a set of common goals. I think many (if not most) people's "needs & wants" around Mensa membership are met by receiving the magazine, the (terrific) newsletter, and perhaps attending some meetings that interest them. If that meets their

needs, and this is a group in which participation is voluntary, casual, and supposed to be fun & enjoyable, people will neither see any need to do more, nor feel any guilt when asked to volunteer and they say "no". If there were a clear, common, compelling strategic goal - to which people were strongly invested - there might be greater participation.

2) Generational engagement: The degree to (and means by) which Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Millennials engage in organizations varies greatly. My parents are strong proponents of the "civic good" model of engagement: you carve out time and give it to something that makes the community (or the world) better. Some of that has flowed down to me. I'd love to

read what folks from each of the generational groups have to say about how they approach groups.

3) Fatigue / Time pressures: It was (at one point in time) called "work/life balance"; that phrase has morphed into "work/life integration". Mine is pretty well "integrated"; I see lots of people who don't take their vacation time, work too many hours and don't get enough family time, let alone take time to go to the gym, attend Mensa meetings, or do other activities that help keep body & soul together. I won't use this space to talk about the reasons for those pressures, the challenges they present, etc. ... but I will say that it's "the way it is" for now, and that we likely can't change that - but we need to

find a way to work within the constraints it provides.

Personally, my job keeps me too busy ... I enjoy it immensely, but it is very consuming. Outside of work, whether it's charitable involvement (raising guide dogs), board memberships (the University of Texas's Division of Diversity & Community Engagement, Miami University of Ohio's 1809 Alumni group - and no, 1809 is the year the university was founded, NOT my class year), or doing strategic planning workshops for colleges & universities, I don't take a lot of time for other things. Each of you likely has a list of your involvements and passions that take your time. "Mensa" may appear on that list of passions for you, and I'm delighted that it does - I appreciate the magazine and the newsletter, and the work you do to keep the group vibrant and alive. I am very comfortable (and satisfied) as a Life member ... getting my magazine, reading this newsletter, and (on the very rare occasion that I'm downtown on the right day at the right time) meeting for dinner. There's little chance I will attend a Games Night or an AG, just as there is little chance I would attend a quilting class at church or a fraternal visit to another lodge in Freemasonry.

My recommendations? Ensure we have people from across the generations engaged in the crafting of events & opportunities to engage. When someone says, "Why don't we...", ask if they want to lead that and if you can help coach them if they haven't put an event together in the past. Continue to create a diverse, welcoming environment for people to bring their skills and passions, and encourage them to participate at whatever level they would like ... even if it's reading the magazine, the newsletter, and occasionally writing an e-mail. I'm

a very happy member at my current level of participation, have always felt welcomed & valued by the group, and greatly appreciate the work by those who do volunteer their time, talent, & treasure to keep Mensa going.

Rob Shook

Hi, I just read your "Editor's Choice" for August 2012. I actually have read most of the Gazette for several years now, so I understand the frustration.

"So," you say, "Why haven't you participated?"

My husband and I tried unsuccessfully to get a "South of Austin" group started. We offered dining experiences and had some participation for a few months. We have been members for many years - first in Florida and now here. We were very active in the Florida group and gladly drove 35 miles each way to participate in several monthly events.

This time, not so much. Why? We tried the Thursday thing at Whole Foods, one meeting, and an RG. We enjoyed the RG, but not as much as we had the ones in FL. As for the other things, not much there, sorry. We are active with the Scholarship contest each year and will be involved again this year.

I "don't care enough to participate" with this group. It is not a very friendly group - far too cliquish to suit us. But I have proudly been a member of Mensa for many, many years and will not let a small group of folks who don't seem to care one way or the other if I am a member run me off.

I don't have to attend anything to have a Mensa license plate on my car. I meet lots of nice folks that

way and get to tell them about how much I enjoy Mensa.

Hope that answers your questions.

--
Gloria Fortin

I live in a community of about 50,000 souls, and some time ago, three unicycle riders wanted to organize teams to play unicycle lacrosse, having been inspired by the local unicycle football league. Only five people showed up at the meeting, and two were kids who thought they would get free sno-cones. A friend of mine went, but I was one of the 49,995 who didn't make the meeting. I suppose it might have turned out to be fun and rewarding, but I just can't feel like there is anything wrong with me for not participating.

So, my point is this: if the 600 members in our Mensa group don't want to be involved as members of the board, it doesn't really mean that there is something wrong with the 600 members. I think it means that we don't have enough information to figure out for certain whether it would be fun and rewarding or a painful, frustrating waste of time, or something in-between. Sure, it might lead to a sense of accomplishment, new friends, etc., but many of us are also dimly aware that there has been some stress in the board environment in the past. Plus, a quarter of the board resigned this year. Hmmmmm. All of us are required to face a certain amount of conflict and drama already built into our lives. Why volunteer for the possibility of more?

What's the good stuff?

J.D. Jamieson
San Marcos



Hi Rose,

Thank you for again stimulating conversation among our members. Let me also thank the members who have responded. I appreciate reading the comments of members who care enough to write, even if I do not agree with some of the things they have to say.

I would like to address two issues that the three letters bring up—that of cliques and that of service to our organization. But first I would like to correct a potential misconception that some folks may have. In his letter, JD points to some stress on the board, implies that there is some connection between that stress and recent resignation of board members, and seems to suggest with his “hmmmm” that the board is a stressful place that few may want to endure. The facts are quite different.

Patty and I came to Austin from Georgia, where we were somewhat active, attending monthly get-togethers and having fun with other Mensans. We thought it was a friendly group and enjoyed the weekly TGITs, monthly meetings, and the RGs. A short time after our arrival I was

asked to fill a vacancy on the ExComm (as the board was called then). I agreed and attended several meetings during which I watched as stress built. I did not know enough about the group at the time to take sides, but I was appalled at the rancor displayed. The fundamental issue was who had the final authority to make decisions for the group--the President or the ExComm. In the end the ExComm won and the President resigned. Janet Kres took over and worked tirelessly to mend fences and bring harmony to the ExComm. She would remind us that our primary job was to cooperate, compromise, and most of all have fun.

But the important thing is that this stress occurred quite a while ago, under the previous bylaws and an ExComm rather than our current structure--a board with standing committees. It was before the terms of Janet, Ron Edelstein, myself, and John Neemidge. Since then, except for one minor problem during a three-month transition term, board members have worked in harmony. Those that resigned last term had medical problems that prevented them from attending meetings. We were all sorry to see them leave. I have had and continue to have fun on the board, and I believe other board members have enjoyed their time as well and been proud of their achievements.

Don Drumtra



[After viewing [/front.moveon.org/if-you-loved-the-west-wing-watch-this-now/?rc=daily.share](http://front.moveon.org/if-you-loved-the-west-wing-watch-this-now/?rc=daily.share), JimAnn Oliver responded as follows.]

Rose –Thanks for sending this. He is dead-on that we are not the greatest country in the world and I think his statistics are fairly accurate. I am sorry he (in my opinion) ruined his point by saying we used to be more moral, fight wars for the right reasons, etc. This is the country that mistreated the Indians and the Hawaiians (just for starters), turned a blind eye while people were lynched for all the wrong reasons, experimented on their own citizens in secret, allowed the leaders of industry to build huge fortunes on the backs of others who were down-trodden, lied to its own people, and so forth and so on. We are still capable of, and sometimes do, amazing and wonderful things and many people are devoted to what is right and good; but we are no worse than we have ever been. The famous historians, the Durants, when asked if people had improved over time in the sweep of history said we are still pretty much the same as we have always been. I am not entirely a pessimist; but I think it is wrong to paint this rosy picture of the past as much as it is wrong to ignore all the ways in which we are NOT the greatest country in the world. We can continue on an individual level to strive for what is moral, helpful, loving, kind, and considerate, and do our bit to make the country and the world a better place for humanity. It is not necessary to live in an illusion or deny history in order to do this.

A Small but Smart Group



Sun City Mensa group keeps a low profile and packs a powerful intellect.

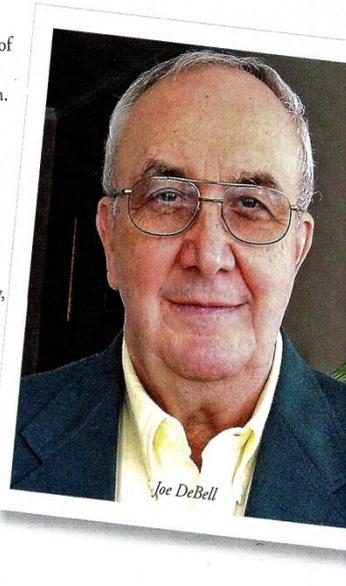
By C. Wayne Dawson

Sun City Mensa organizer Joe DeBell is somewhat reluctant to talk about his group. "I don't want people to get the wrong idea," he says. "We aren't out to promote ourselves and we don't want people to think we are an elite group who looks down on others." That is a humble disclaimer from a member of an informal organization whose attendees must test out in the general population's upper two percent for intelligence, but an understandable one for those who want to avoid the image of Dr. Sheldon Cooper, as seen on TV's *Big Bang Theory*.

Unlike the stereotype of geeks with thick frame glasses and white socks spending their free time poring over computer manuals, Mensa

members belong to a wide variety of interest groups and hold beliefs as diverse as the American population. "One of my best Mensa friends is an atheist," Joe says. "Another member is a Wiccan. Our group's interest groups are too numerous to list, but can include things such as the paranormal, black holes, religious controversies, robotics, Transylvania, computers, etc. Truly, no subject is off the table!"

However, Mensans do often have two things in common, he maintains. "First, they have a tendency to see patterns in things and make conclusions on potential results. Second, they have an innate curiosity about everything."



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Joe emphasizes that the Sun City Mensa group is composed of former and currently active members, and is so informal he asks that it not be referred to as a chapter. "We have no officers, no formal structure. The one rule we have is to maintain respect for one another's opinions. Also, unlike a Sun City regular club, we accept participants from the Georgetown community outside Sun City."

“We pattern our discussions after the salons attended by Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, and Nikola Tesla.”

The group, according to Joe, takes many cues from the geniuses of the past. "We pattern our discussions after the salons attended by Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, and Nikola Tesla. Some of these gatherings were patronized by scientists who borrowed from one another to make inventions that changed the world."

The Sun City Mensans are fairly evenly divided between men and women. Current topics considered for discussion are: Have you ever had what can be considered a paranormal experience? What do you think about the concept of reincarnation? How valid is the Old Testament? Gaining an ego: How do you know when that happens?

Those interested in looking into Mensa may phone Joe DeBell at (512) 240-4038. ■

[Joe says:] I wasn't enthusiastic at all about doing it - - one of their writers apparently saw my little monthly squib in our Sun City Bulletin in the Sun Rays about looking for local Mensan Sun City residents to join our little discussion group,and called me. I demurred - we are not looking for exposure (or notoriety) as such - - just a quiet little discussion group—not meeting for dark nefarious reasons or at full moon at midnight with candles and a pentagram and chants.

But he was persistent; and finally I agreed to meet him and talk, providing I had last review of any article to make sure I was representing anything I said about Mensa accurately. The Georgetown Focus magazine (free) has a readership of maybe 50,000. Full of ads and small articles about Georgetown happenings. They may have their own website keyword FOCUS. We met and talked; with him scribbling madly away with a stubby pencil, probably for some 90 minutes. The article, however, turned out was to be limited to about 400-500 words; and was to be the first in a series about "seniors" - since Sun City is so much an 800 lb. gorilla in Georgetown.

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As of August 30, 2012

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* Experienced members who've worked with the National Office (NO) and the American Mensa Committee (AMC), and can help members navigate both.

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 LoneStaRG XIV
2 LoneStaRG XIV	3 LoneStaRG XIV ***Labor Day***	4	5	6 Board Meeting	7	8
9	10 Member Meeting	11	12	13 ALG Deadline Chess Night TGIT-North	14	15
16	17	18 Eclectic Eats	19	20 TGIT-South	21	22
23/30	24	15	26	27 TGIT-North Seal & Label	28	29

See the online calendar (ism.us.mensa.org/events/calendar.html) for the latest additions, cancellations, or changes. Online calendar inputs may be posted at any time. Calendar input for the printed calendar is due by the second Thursday of each month for the following month's calendar.

Board Meeting

1st Thursday

Sep. 6, 7:30 to 8:30 pm
Carver Branch Library

Member Meeting

2nd Monday

Sep. 10, 6:45-8:15 PM
SIG Discussion Group

ALG/Calendar Deadline

2nd Thursday

Sep. 13, Midnight
Submissions due to Editor.

Chess Night (with the TGIT-N group)

2nd Thursday

Sep. 13, 6-8 PM
Bring your chess sets if you have them.
Hosted by Douglas Yee.

Thank Goodness It's Thursday (TGIT-North)

2nd & 4th Thursdays

Sep. 13 & 27, 6:00-8:00 PM

Meet us at the Café for conversation, food and fun. Prospective members welcome. Look for the Mensa table sign.

Eclectic Eats

Tuesday, September 18, 7 pm
Sao Paulo Restaurante
2809 San Jacinto, Austin
512/473-9988

www.saopaulos.net

We're going south of the border (south of several borders, actually) to a place with an outstanding Brazilian and Tex-Mex bill of fare. Several of their menu items can be prepared vegetarian upon request. Please RSVP to Aaron Rabushka at 512/280-2807 or arabushka@austin.rr.com by September 17 at mid-day.

Thank Goodness It's Thursday (TGIT-South)

3rd Thursday

Sep. 20, 6:00-8:00 PM

We will meet at the Bistro 420, across from the adult beverage section, near the center of the store. Prospective members welcome.

Seal & Label

4th Thursday

Sep. 27, 6:00-8:00 PM

Join the TGIT Group to help seal and label the newsletter.

UPCOMING IN OCTOBER

Oct. 1. Board Meeting
Oct. 8, Chess Night, ALG Deadline
Oct. 8 & 22, TGIT-North
Oct. 12, Member Meeting
Oct. 15, TGIT-South
Oct. 22, Seal & Label

Your Event Here!

EVENT DIRECTIONS



Board and Member Meetings

Carver Public Library, Rooms 2-3
1161 Angelina, Austin
512-974-1010
Between 11th and 12th Streets, east of I-35. This location allows direct access to the library from 183 and via FM 969 MLK and 12th Street.

TGIT-North, Chess Night, Seal & Label

Central Market Café North at Central Park
4001 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin
512-206-1020
East of N. Lamar between 38th and 44th Streets; on the south side of the store.

TGIT-South

Central Market Café South at Westgate Mall:
4477 S. Lamar Blvd., Austin
512-899-4300
On the south side of the S. Lamar access road (the south access road of I-290/SR71) between Westgate Blvd. and Frontier Trail.

Send undeliverable copies or change of address to:

AMERICAN MENSA LIMITED
1229 CORPORATE DR W
ARLINGTON TX 76006-6103

PUBLICATION NOTICES

The Armadillo Literary Gazette is owned by American Mensa Limited and is the monthly official publication of Lone Star Mensa.
Subscriptions are included with Lone Star membership. Other Mensa members may subscribe for \$10 per year. Subscribers may request delivery by email, USPS mail, or both. Send subscription requests to the Publications Office, 3206 Twilight Trail, Austin, TX 78748-2608.
Submissions of all types are encouraged. The deadline is the second Thursday of each month. Submissions may be by email (preferred) 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, unless restricted by the author.
Calendar inputs may be submitted at any time and will normally be published online within three days and in the next month's printed calendar if received before the cut-off date. The cut-off date is the second Thursday of the previous month.
Advertising may be accepted subject to space limitations. Lone Star Mensa members may submit 2 non-commercial ads per year at no charge, limited to 4 column line maximum. Publication dates are subject to editor's discretion. Business-card-sized ads (2" x 3") are \$10 for one month, \$25 for three months, and \$40 for six months. Rates for other sized ads or other time periods are available upon request. Ads must be camera-ready, accurately sized, and should be submitted via email in Microsoft Word (preferred, DOC or DOCX), JPG, or PDF format. The deadline for ad submissions to the newsletter editor is 5 days before the general newsletter deadline. Publication may be delayed due to space limitations and may be edited to meet publication standards.

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Calendar submissions may be sent to
calendar@lsm.us.mensa.org

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Armadillo Literary Gazette

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