

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs—Opportunities for Participation**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the first in a series of articles describing the Lonestar Mensa program structure and associated officer positions.*

In the past few years, most of the activities of Lonestar Mensa seem to have been led by a few dedicated people with the rest of us standing by watching. In my case, family, school, and other activities had not left me much time to devote to LSM. I sometimes attended the TGIT and helped fold the newsletters and occasionally attended a Monthly meeting, RG, or social function, but I hesitated to participate more because most activity leader positions required a significantly larger time commitment. I eventually joined the Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large only because it had a small commitment of one night a month. I volunteered for Treasurer because no one else came forward to do the work. The Treasurer's job required more time commitment, but the work was flexible and could be done between other commitments I have in my life. I simply did not have time for a larger commitment to LSM. In discussing my situation with other members I found that my situation was common. Some members said they would like to participate more but the positions all required more commitment than they were willing to assume.

Last year, the 2006 Executive Committee discussed the problem of finding volunteers and it seemed to us that if we had more positions with less commitment for each, there would be more opportunities for members who wanted to participate but did not have the time for greater commitment. We decided that the best way to do this was to divide up the work of our current activities into smaller packages so that those who had a lot going on in their life could participate. But, to accommodate those who wanted to do more, we thought that it would also be important to have some opportunities with greater responsibilities and more time commitment. So, as one of their first actions, the 2007 Executive Committee members approved ASIE (action still in effect) 2007-1-1 defining roles for 41 coordinators and committee chairs arranged in a hierarchical program structure under the LocSec (president) and Executive Committee. These positions provide a mixture of small commitments and larger commitments so that members may participate according to the time they have available. In addition, the ASIE specified that members could hold more than one position if they desired. A copy of the description part of the ASIE was printed on page 7 of the January 2007 *Armadillo* while the full ASIE is available on LSM Website.

In the next few months, I plan to describe the overall program structure and then address each program, together with its positions. I hope you will find this series of interest.

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs—The Basic Structure**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the second in a series of articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

In January, by approving ASIE (Action Still in Effect) 2007-1-1, the Executive Committee established six programs and approved volunteer positions for Program Chairs and 35 associated coordinators for the various activities of the programs. Some of these positions such as the Membership Officer and the Testing Coordinator were previously defined in the bylaws and have not changed. Others such as the RG Registrar and RG Hospitality Chair were defined in ASIEs and have not changed. What has changed is that all these positions have been structured into a hierarchy that allows volunteers to devote differing amounts of time to Lonestar Mensa activities. All the positions have been given titles. However, to provide volunteers additional flexibility, they may assume a related title if they do not like the one specified in the ASIE. In addition, the chair and coordinators within a program may decide how the work will be divided up within the program.

To support program activities, the Executive Committee has established a budget for each program and most programs are given a share of the revenue of Lonestar Mensa. In addition, program coordinators may raise additional funds through fundraising activities. (The Education Program has a coordinator position for this function). The Treasurer has created a program summary as part of the monthly financial report for the Executive Committee that shows specific program revenue and expenses against the approved budget. The “Treasurer’s Report for 2006” on page 5 of the January *Armadillo* shows the actual revenue and expenses by program for 2006.

The six programs include all the activities that Executive Committee members thought would be reasonable for Lonestar Mensa:

- Recruitment Program
- Communications Program
- Symposia Program
- Education Program
- Subgroups Program
- Regional Gathering Program

Next month we’ll explore the Recruitment Program and cover the other programs in succeeding months.

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs— Recruitment Program**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the third in a series of articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

The Lonestar Mensa Recruitment Program encompasses care for current members and their retention and recognition as well as activities designed to bring in new members. The Recruitment Chair is responsible for managing the 2007 Recruitment budget of \$800 and for chairing the Recruitment Committee consisting of the Chair and coordinators for the various aspects of the program including membership, testing, awards, and nominations. The chair and coordinators also develop local publicity to support the program.

Membership is led by five volunteers including the Membership Officer and four coordinators for current members, new members, lapsed members, and LSM officers. These volunteers keep track of our members and their special accomplishments, help them learn what Mensa is all about, respond to their specific questions and concern about Lonestar and American Mensa, and contact them about special membership events and membership renewals. Coordinators also develop publicity to support membership recruitment and officer accomplishments.

Testing is led by the Testing Coordinator who works with the Facilities Coordinator and several Proctors to administer exams to prospective members. The Testing Coordinator organizes and administers testing events, develops associated publicity, provides take home exams for perspective members, and, with the New Member Coordinator, helps potential members understand Mensa and those who qualify take the next step to join Mensa.

Awards is led by the Awards Coordinator who seeks out Lonestar members deserving special recognition at local, regional, and national for their services to Mensa, manages the paperwork needed for their nomination and selection, and develops publicity about the various awards and winners.

Nominations for officer positions in Lonestar Mensa are developed by the three-member Nominations Committee which also oversees annual and special elections and associated paperwork and publicity. The Nominations Committee is appointed by the ExComm in September of each year and serves until the following September.

Currently, Mark Kres serves as both our Membership Officer and Testing Coordinator. The Recruitment Chair and other officer positions are vacant. If you would like more information about the positions, or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Janet Kres.

Next month's article will cover the Communications Program.

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs— Communications Program**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

The Lonestar Mensa Communications Program includes the main communications elements of Lonestar Mensa the most important and most expensive element of which is our Newsletter. The Communications Chair is responsible for managing the 2007 Communications Program budget of \$3,600, for raising funds for the Communications Program, and for chairing the Communications Committee consisting of the Chair and officers listed below.

The Newsletter Editor is responsible for building the Armadillo Literary Gazette (or ALG for short) from a collection of articles, calendar items, advertisements, and other items submitted each month into a coherent whole ready for printing and distribution. The Newsletter Circulation Manager is responsible for getting the ALG printed and distributed to the members. The Newsletter Advertising Coordinator is responsible for finding people and businesses to advertise in the ALG thereby supporting not only the ALG but other LSM programs.

The Lonestar Webmaster is responsible for the LSM Website and its contents. This includes posting announcements of events, providing news that exceeds the ALG's space limitations such as photographs of events, and for making ALG and official notices available electronically for LSM members. The eList Coordinator manages LSMs electronic mail lists email lists.

The publicity Officer (or Media Coordinator) is the Lonestar Mensa's single point of contact for the press and other outside news organization. As such this officer coordinates the publicity activities of volunteers in the other programs and presents a single unified face to the outside world. This officer brings together reporters and other LSM officers to highlight our programs and attract more members.

The Record Manager maintains the history, ASIEs, Records, and Archives of Lonestar Mensa according to standard practices for non-profit organizations.

Currently, Rachael Stewart serves as our Editor, Helen Siders as our Circulation Manager, Geri Neemidge as our Webmaster, John Neemidge as our Elist Coordinator, and Paul Anderson as our Publicity Officer and Media Coordinator. They are all doing a fantastic job. To complete the Communications Program team of officers we need volunteers to be the Communications Chair and Record Manager. If you would like more information about or would like to volunteer to serve in these or any other Lonestar Mensa officer positions, please contact Janet Kres.

Next month's article will cover the Symposia Program.

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs— Symposia Program**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the fifth in a series of articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

What is a symposium? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “symposium” as: “1. A drinking-party; a convivial meeting for drinking, conversation, and intellectual entertainment: properly among the ancient Greeks, hence generally.” *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* adds: “Any meeting or social gathering where ideas are exchanged.” In Lonestar Mensa, all these activities are included under the umbrella of our Symposia Program.

The Lonestar Mensa Symposia Program includes our monthly meetings, our Christmas party, our Halloween party, our picnics, our bridge and poker nights, weekly TGIT suppers, camping trips, and all other scheduled local gatherings. The Symposia Chair is responsible for managing the 2007 Symposia Program budget of \$800, for raising symposia funds, and for chairing the Symposia Committee consisting of the Chair, the Programs Officer, the Symposia Coordinator, and the Symposia Publicity Coordinator.

The Programs Officer is responsible for scheduling speakers for our monthly general meetings, for scheduling facilities, for hosting the speakers, and for conducting the meetings.

The Symposia Coordinator is responsible for helping hosts plan, schedule, and conduct all other symposia and local gatherings so that all of us have pleasant experiences and good memories of them. As such the Symposia Coordinator should understand good food handling practices and the various rules American Mensa (AML) has established for local gatherings. This officer also may provide food handling expertise to the Lonestar Regional Gathering Committee if needed..

The Symposia Publicity Coordinator is responsible for working with the Lonestar Mensa Publicity Officer / Media Coordinator to provide publicity on future symposia. The goal is that all Lonestar Mensa members who wish to participate are notified of upcoming symposia. The coordinator also develops appropriate newsletter coverage after memorable events.

Currently, Todd Shaw is our Programs Officer and Paul Anderson, our Lonestar Mensa Publicity Officer / Media Coordinator, has been doing double duty as Symposia Publicity Coordinator, writing announcements for the monthly meetings and then publishing them. The evidence of their good work may be seen in the quality of our speakers and the attendance at these meetings. We are looking for volunteers for the vacant officer positions of Symposia Chair, Symposia Coordinator, and Symposia Publicity Coordinator to complete the Symposia team. And, of course, we are always looking for volunteers to host Lonestar Mensa activities. If you would like more information about the positions, or would like to volunteer to help with or sponsor an event, please contact Janet Kres.

Next month’s article will cover our even larger symposium, the Lonestar Regional Gathering or LonestarRG.

## Lonestar Mensa Programs— LonestaRG

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the sixth in a series of articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

Last month we learned about the Symposia Program covering our local gatherings. In addition to local gatherings, we sponsor an annual gathering called The Lonestar Mensa Regional Gathering or LonestaRG, It is a three day long symposia—a time to get to know other Mensans, to learn from the variety of programs presented, to support the Education Program, and to have fun. The LonestaRG is large enough, important enough, and enough work that it is budgeted and managed as a separate program to ensure its success.

The LonestaRG Chair is responsible for managing the 2007 budget of \$4,400 and for chairing the RG Committee consisting of the seven subcommittee chairs listed below and other representatives that chair may invite to participate. For example, a photographer or hotel representative may be invited to be a member of the committee.

The **Registrar** and Registration Committee are responsible for receiving and tracking registrations up to a year prior to the AG, passing money received and other information to the Treasurer, making name tags, manning the registration desk at the RG, and resolving registration problems. The **Hospitality Chair** and Committee are responsible for planning for, buying, preparing, and providing food and beverages for the RG. The Chair and some committee members should have food handling expertise and certification. The **Programs Chair** and Committee are responsible for planning and putting together the RG programs and other activities before the RG and the care and feeding of speakers and facilitators during the RG.

The **Facilities Chair** and Committee are responsible for negotiating the hotel contract before the RG and supervising contract implementation during the AG. The committee members are also responsible for trash collection, coordinating volunteers, and working with the programs committee in the care and feeding of speakers and facilitators during the RG. The **Publicity Chair** and Committee are responsible for working with the Lonestar Mensa Publicity Officer / Media Coordinator to market and advertise the RG in various venues before the RG, for press liaison, signage, and photography during the RG, and for publicity after the RG. The **Drawings, Prizes, and Awards Chair** and Committee are responsible for funding raising activities before and during the RG and the awarding and distribution of prizes and certificates. The **Treasurer** is responsible for working with the Lonestar Mensa Treasurer in support of all financial aspects of the RG.

Currently, Paul Pierce is our RG Chair. Committee members are Ray O'Connor, Hospitality Chair, Jane Thompson, Registrar, Paul Pierce, Programs Chair, Ellen Lucasik, Facilities Chair, John Neemidge, Publicity Chair, and Don Drumtra, Treasurer. We are looking for a volunteer to chair drawings, prizes, and awards and volunteers to help during the AG. If you would like more information about the positions, or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Paul Pierce, Janet Kres, or John Neemidge. .

One of the purposes of the Lonestar RG is to support our Education Program which we will explore in next month's article.

## Lonestar Mensa Programs— Education Program

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the seventh in a series of articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

Some would say that the most important contribution that Mensa can make to society is to leave the world a better place than we found it—not only to use our intelligence to have fun and solve our world's problems, but to promote the recognition of gifted children and young adults and work to build their strengths so that they can solve their world's problems. The Lonestar Mensa Education Program helps prepare gifted children and young adults for the future.

The Education Program guides our work with gifted children, work with young adults, scholarship awards, participation in science fairs, culture quests and other colloquia, and any other education activities we might want to focus on, as well as fund raising and publicity activities to support the Education Program. The Education Chair is responsible for managing the 2007 Education Program budget of \$760 and for chairing the Education Committee consisting of the Chair, the Gifted Children Coordinator, the Scholarship Chair, the Education Publicity Coordinator, and the Education Funding Coordinator.

There is no junior category of membership in Mensa, so children are welcome at most Mensa events – unless the activity is limited to adults for some material reason or by the organizer. To support the Mensa International Gifted Children Program, American Mensa aspires to build its Gifted Children's Program through the recruitment of high-quality leaders at the national level. The Lonestar Mensa Gifted Children Coordinator is responsible for our Gifted Children Program working closely with the American Mensa Coordinator to provide stimulating activities for children as well as providing support and resources for all Young Mensans and their families in the Lonestar Mensa area.

The Scholarship Chair coordinates the Lonestar Mensa scholarship award activities involving our local portion of an annual essay contest sponsored by National Mensa, open to all students past high school. Entrants do not have to be Mensa members. The Scholarship Committee advertises, collects, and judges entries in our extended local area, from Marble Falls to Waco and College Station, following instructions from National Mensa as to procedures for collecting and judging entries, sending our local group's winning choices on to Regional and National judging, and announcing our local winners.

Finally, the Education Publicity and Educational Funding Coordinators assist the Education and Scholarship Chairs and the Gifted Children Coordinator by working with the Lonestar Mensa Publicity officer / Media Coordinator in advertising our education programs, mailing flyers to local schools and colleges in the fall, and in fundraising activities to support our programs, particularly the annual raffle and other fund raising activities at our Regional Gathering.

Currently, Michele Vaughan is our Gifted Children Coordinator and Claudia Harbert is our Scholarship Chair. We are looking for volunteers for the vacant officer positions of Education Chair, Education Publicity Coordinator, and Education Funding Coordinator. And, of course, we are always looking for volunteers for the Scholarship Committee and to assist with education program activities. If you would like more information about the positions, or would like to volunteer to help with or sponsor an event, please contact Michele, Claudia, or Janet Kres.

Next month's article will cover our Subgroups Program.

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs— Subgroups Program**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the eighth in a series of ten articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

Although all Mensa members are welcome to participate in all Mensa activities, geography makes that sometimes difficult. Thus, regions and chapters have been established to bring Mensa activities closer to home. But sometimes even chapter activities are not close enough to home for routine participation. Thus smaller units, subgroups, may be established to cover smaller geographic areas. In the past we have had subgroups in Waco, College Station, and University of Texas. In addition to geographic areas, we provide information and other assistance to Mensa travelers who might want to visit or pass through our area. The Subgroups Chair helps subgroups get established, coordinates their activities, supports the subgroup publicity coordinator, and manages the Subgroups budget currently at \$200.

Subgroup Coordinators are like mini-Local Secretaries in their assigned areas and work with the Program Chairs to support special activities in their areas, such as recruitment and testing, making use of Program Chair funding to support them. But as one might expect, the most popular program in subgroups is the symposia program.

SIGHT (Service of Information, Guidance, and Hospitality to Travelers. assists Mensans who are traveling. The scope of the services offered ranges from short-term accommodations (two to three days is usually the maximum) to providing information on local Mensa activities and local attractions. All contacts between prospective guests and local hosts go through the local SIGHT coordinators.

The SIGHT program is in place in more than 40 countries throughout the world. Many members use SIGHT regularly, The primary SIGHT function is to match potential guests with suitable hosts in his or her area. Once the local Coordinator has been contacted by the guest, he or she will find the appropriate host for the guest, dependent upon requirements. The local Coordinator will match the guest to the host in that area, passing along details of arrival and departure times, duration of stay, etc. The host then communicates directly with the guest. However, most guests want exactly what a local Coordinator or host would want: the chance to meet like-minded people who share the same interests and hobbies, who like to share their stories about Mensa and their travels, and who like to open up a little part of themselves to new friends.

Steve Vaughan has been doing a wonderful job as our SIGHT Coordinator. Robbie Fraser is our newly appointed Bryan-College Station Subgroup Coordinator and Vignesh Prakash, coordinated the University of Texas student subgroup until last spring when he and most of the members graduated. If you are interested in chairing the subgroups program, coordinating publicity, or setting up a subgroup and leading it, please contact Janet Kres.

Next month's article will cover mediation and other LSM activities.



## **Lonestar Mensa Programs— Mediation and Other Activities**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the ninth in a series of ten articles explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

The American Mensa Mediator's handbook begins,

Since the inception of American Mensa, conflicts have arisen between members. The fact that Mensa is made up of highly intelligent people is no guarantee there will not be terrible disagreements. High intelligence may, in fact, be the partial cause of some disagreements. Mensa has been said to provide, among many other things, "a stage upon which some members can enact the drama of their madness." Conflict resolution within Mensa local groups is often handled by local ombudsmen, mediators, or arbitrators. Within this document, the term "Mediator" will be used to cover ombudsmen, mediators, or arbitrators serving on the local level. Although many local groups may never have the need of a Mediator, when the need does arise, they need the best possible candidate. When conflicts arise within Mensa, the Mediator can become the most important officer in the entire organization.

In Lonestar Mensa conflicts are normally resolved through face to face communications and we seldom have need of a mediator. However, just in case we have a mediator, our Ombudsman, who can be called upon to help to resolve serious conflicts between members. Since we expect few, if any, conflicts requiring mediation, and since Lonestar Mensa members normally work with each other in peace and harmony, no funds are budgeted for our Ombudsman. If, however, the Ombudsman is called upon, funds are made available to cover any associated expense.

We also participate in mediation activities at the Mensa region level in support of the Regional Vice-Chairman, currently Ralph Rudolph, to address conflicts that exceed the capability of the local groups to resolve. Our Arbitrator serves at the call of the RVC to mediate such conflicts. The RVC covers the expenses for such dispute resolution so no LSM funds are budgeted to support the Arbitrator.

Currently, Kathleen Holiman serves as both our Ombudsman and Arbitrator. She reports that she has not been called upon once during her time in office.

Other activities include any Lonestar Mensa activities that are not included in the programs discussed previously in this series. Such activities include non-program administrative expenses of Lonestar Mensa as a whole such as bank service charges, routine business postage, and copies for the Executive Committee Meetings. It also includes revenue and expenses for prior years such as unexpected reimbursement for prior year activities, and current year revenue exceeding program estimates. We have budgeted \$120, to support other activities.

Next month's article will complete this series summarizing what we have learned and looking toward the future.

## **Lonestar Mensa Programs— Summary**

*Submitted by Don Drumtra, Treasurer*

*Note: This is the tenth and concluding article in a series of explaining the new Lonestar Mensa Budget Structure and the many new positions and opportunities available for you.*

The previous nine articles have provided an overview of each of the six established programs of Lonestar Mensa—the Recruitment, Communications, Symposia, LonestarRG, Education, and Subgroups programs—as well as some of the miscellaneous activities we have. These overviews were not intended to be prescriptive or fixed in concrete, rather they were provided as examples of what activities the programs might include and how program chairs might structure their programs. Program chairs and the officers of each program are encouraged to try new things to interest LSM members and to increase the value of our membership. If the overall structure does not serve us well, we can add new programs and we can abolish existing ones. The ExComm can also establish independent committees to do special things. The possibilities are almost endless.

Program chairs may need money to enhance their program activities and to do good things. Each of the previous program overviews listed the program's budget for 2007. At the end of each year when the budget is developed for the following year, Program Chairs and the Executive Committee members estimate, revenue, and budgets funds for each program. If it appears that funds will be left over after the budget is completed (not usually the case), the ExComm will allocate them during the year for special projects or to help programs with special activities. Then after the RG results are in, ExComm members and Program Chairs look at each program's expenditures and adjustments if needed to better support our programs. Programs however are not limited to the budgets from the LSM treasury. Program Chairs and officers are encouraged to have fundraising activities to provide more funds for their other activities.

This has been an interesting series to write and, although this is the last article of this series, there is no reason why you—chairs, coordinators, and other volunteers—cannot begin a new series or just write a single article letting us all know the great things you are doing. If you have had a special event or other activity of particular interest Rachael would be more than happy to publish your summary and photographs in a special section of the printed *Armadillo Literary Gazette* or, if you like, she can provide a special online version with extended coverage and color pictures—she will even help you write it and lay it out if you are nice to her.

