

# THE WIRE

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- **April 30th - Meeting at Asia Bistro and Seafood in Montgomery, 6pm.**
- **May 28th - Monthly meeting (location to be announced).**

## STATUS UPDATES (MARCH/APRIL) - BY LOCSEC RODGER MORRISON



Greetings fellow Mensans. As some of you already know, I was elected to be your new Local Secretary at our meeting in January and we had a pretty good meeting in February. Unfortunately, I came down with a case of the shingles that really kept me down for a few weeks. If you have never had them, you don't know what you are missing. Anyway, after a mis-diagnosis and some wasted time taking the wrong meds, and then after a couple of weeks of taking the correct meds, I am finally getting back to normal (if you can call me normal, haha). Barbara Hoover was kind enough to take my place at our March meeting (thank you, Barbara!), though few attended.

That being said, a few things have changed since I took over from Les Holmes in January. We

have appointed a new webmaster, Mr. Brent Gourley, who was kind enough to volunteer to help us out with our online presence. He has already made a few changes to our website, and there are more to come. I read our bylaws and there were a few minor issues that needed to be addressed, which were handled at our February meeting. First, there is a term limit that is in place on the office of treasurer, which has been held by Bob Akin for a while now. We asked for volunteers to fill the position but none were found, so by a unanimous decision Bob was asked to continue at least through the end of this term. This motion was carried unanimously. Bob has also been serving as our only proctor and now is officially our Proctor Coordinator (though he actually was doing this before, Mensa somehow lost record of it). Many other posts remain vacant.

Unfortunately however, the time for our normal elections had passed, so volunteers were sought to fill key positions for the remainder of this term from those attending February's meeting. Ms. Barbara Hoover has agreed to be our new Deputy Local Secretary. We also chose Members-at-Large from among those attending. Dave Wideman, Charles Hightower, Laurel Akin, and Lee Cash agreed to serve in that role for

the remainder of the year. We also agreed that we would look into the possibility of offering a scholarship in the near future. At our January meeting, Lee agreed to act as our Scholarship Coordinator, but we all agreed to help out with the process as needed.

One of the things that has been an issue, though not a big one, is that of the availability of a proctor. Bob Akin has served as our only proctor for quite a while, but he is in Enterprise and it is not fair to ask him to travel all over our part of the lower half of the state to proctor the Mensa entrance test. To help out, I submitted my application to Mensa to be a proctor. This will help out considerably and should make it easier to arrange testing on short notice in the Montgomery area.

One thing that many of you will see soon is an email mailing list. This should save us some money in stamps and allow more frequent communications. RM

### NEW MEMBERS

*We would like to welcome five new members to our chapter:*

- Kimberly Blake (Auburn)*
- Adam Linkner (Montgomery)*
- Jeff Snelling (Auburn)*
- Rachel Shelton (Montgomery)*
- Bryce Donovan (Enterprise).*

## MENSA ELECTIONS (BY KATHE OLIVER) OMEN COLUMN, NATIONAL EDITION, APRIL 2011

*If you haven't received a ballot package by April 30, request a replacement by e-mailing [Operations@americanmensa.org](mailto:Operations@americanmensa.org) or calling 888/294-8035 ext. 5502.*

It is spring, and an odd numbered year. Therefore it is election season for Mensa. Gifted Children's Coordinators are all hearing the same question from Young Mensans: "Can I vote?" The answer is "YES!" Any member can vote in Mensa's elections, no matter what their age is. Membership, not age, is the qualification for voting.

When thinking of elections, the assumption is often that the person or thing with the majority of the votes wins. Usually they do, but not always. The winner could have the plurality of the vote (the largest number, but not a majority), or the winner could be chosen in a multi-stage election with a separation between the popular vote and the final choice of a winner. There are many ways to hold a valid election.

A simple "majority rules" election works well in circumstances where there are unlikely to be more than two candidates. However, that majority could be only a fraction of a percent of the votes cast, giving the winning candidate little or no authority. With three or more candidates the person with the most votes usually has a plurality, not a majority. If an election allows victory with a plurality, the candidate with the most votes has won, but most people voted against them. The winning candidate is likely to have difficulty being an effective leader.

Many systems have been developed to try to avoid this problem. In the United States the best known such system is the two step method used to elect the President, the Electoral College. This system was designed to both keep states with a disproportionate percentage of the population from dictating the nation's leadership and to assure that the country would elect a widely acceptable leader from what was expected to be a broad field of candidates.

American Mensa Committee (AMC) elections sometimes draw three or four candidates for an office. When that happens, American Mensa uses a Preferential Voting System (PVS), sometimes known as an "instant runoff" system, to elect AMC members. Rather than limiting voters to one choice for each office, voters in PVS elections may indicate their first, second, third, etc. choices for office, voting for every candidate if they wish to do so. In this way Mensa tries to guarantee that whoever wins office will have the support necessary to lead and represent Mensa.

Under the "Code of Election Procedures" (published in the January 2011 Mensa Bulletin and available online at [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org)) the ballots are first counted to see if any candidate has a majority of the votes. If no one has a majority, Rule XX states:

"As described by Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, the preferential system used for this election will be the computer equivalent of having ballots sorted into piles according to first choice. The smaller piles will then be redistributed to the larger piles according to second choice beginning with the smallest pile. This procedure shall be repeated until one candidate has a simple majority." (And American Mensa has a new officer).

This system has worked well for Mensa. Often it has been used to decide who would fill several offices on the AMC, but this year it will be used in only two elections, the contests for 1st Vice Chair and for Treasurer. The list of candidates is available on the American Mensa website, [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org). Click on "Elections" for details.

Voting instructions are on the ballot, which will be mailed

separately from the Mensa Bulletin, on or about April 10. Under Rule XVI, they will be sent to all "members of good standing as of April 1, 2011". The election ballot package will contain candidate statements and information on the referenda, as well as the ballot itself.

If you haven't received a ballot package by April 30, request a replacement by e-mailing [Operations@americanmensa.org](mailto:Operations@americanmensa.org) or calling 888/294-8035 ext. 5502. This year there will not be election materials from Mensa International, because there were no referenda and all of the candidates ran unopposed. Congratulations to Chairman Willem Bouwens, Director of Administration Sylvia Herbert, Treasurer Cyndi Kuyper, and Director of Development Bibiana Balanyi.

Before you vote in the American Mensa elections, take the time to learn about the candidates. Read the candidate information which accompanies the ballots. Put your Mensa brain to work, and examine their qualifications. How much experience do the candidates have, and in what? How well suited are the candidates for the jobs for which they are applying?

Once you have made your decisions, complete your ballot and mail it so that it will be received by May 31, 2011, OR vote online by 11:59 PM, Central Daylight Savings Time on May 31. However you choose to do it, don't forget to vote! Make your voice heard in Mensa.

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Kathe Oliver is the Gifted Children's Coordinator of Oregon Mensa, co-Host Group of the 2011 Annual Gathering, A Great Journey West. "Mensa Elections" was adapted from an article written for the April 2011 edition of Omen: The Magazine of Oregon Mensa.



New Member Bryce Donovan on Plow, the horse he takes riding lessons on.

*Editor's note: The following is a submission received from Bryce and is published as received.*

I am Bryce Donovan, was born in New Hampshire, and am 7 3/4 years old. My school is Pinedale Elementary School in Enterprise. I'm in second grade and my favorite school subjects are science and math. My favorite subjects out of school are Astronomy, Physics, Geology, and Mythology.

I like fishing and just started horseback riding lessons. I love my horseback riding lessons. When at home, I like to play the Wii and Monopoly. I like to read Percy Jackson books and love it when mom reads Harry Potter books to me even though I can read them myself.

I'm always looking for science experiments to do at

home. Such as how temperature and amounts effect baking soda and vinegar rocket launches and using food coloring to display how a cut flower drinks water. Building a volcano is something I'd like to do - both above ground and under water. My mom has a beginner telescope but I would like to use one to see Orion's Nebula and to look at the sun if it has the proper filters.

I am in my second year of Cub Scouts and am a Wolf about to graduate to a Bear. I like camping with my mom and my Cub Scout Pack. My Den just participated in a Cubmobile Race in Mariana, Florida. We came in 1<sup>st</sup> place.

I love my pet named Buster. He is a Chiwennie (half Chihuahua and half Dachs-hund). He is 1.5 years old or 10 years in doggy age.

	N <sub>4</sub>	D <sub>6</sub>			E <sub>1</sub>		B <sub>9</sub>	
				B <sub>9</sub>			M <sub>7</sub>	R <sub>5</sub>
		I <sub>3</sub>	R <sub>5</sub>					
			A <sub>2</sub>	D <sub>6</sub>	I <sub>3</sub>	R <sub>5</sub>		
	I <sub>3</sub>		M <sub>7</sub>					E <sub>1</sub>
					A <sub>2</sub>			N <sub>4</sub>
		G <sub>8</sub>						
M <sub>7</sub>		R <sub>5</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>				G <sub>8</sub>	B <sub>9</sub>

**Suzaku™** (from Japanese *Sousaku*: search) is a compound puzzle. The first step is to solve it as a traditional Sudoku puzzle, using letters instead of numbers. The second step is to search for words in the solved Sudoku. Start from any letter, moving up, down, forward, backward or diagonally in any direction, changing direction as needed without reusing the same square for a word. Although there are nine letters in this puzzle, words can be longer if you can find them. (The theme word/phrase for this puzzle is GINGERBREAD MAN.) For extra credit, score the words using their associated number values to try to find the highest word points.

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**MONTHLY MEETING CHANGES:**

We plan to hold our monthly meetings on the last Saturday of each month at 6pm. At our February meeting, it was agreed that our meeting times should be a little earlier than our habit of 7pm, and that we would try to find a location that was a little more conducive to meeting. So, we'll be trying several locations until we find one that works for us. For April, we will meet at Asia Bistro and Seafood on the East side of Montgomery.

We also discussed choosing a topic of discussion for each of our future dinners but that was met with mixed thoughts from the group. In short, I think our meetings are still too small and our interests too varied to narrow ourselves down to a single topic (yet). However, for our April meeting I would like us to discuss how we can make our chapter better, from membership issues, attendance, and the like to activities such as museum tours, planetarium visits, picnics, and such. It is important that we remember that we are spread out over a very large area, so we need to identify events that everyone in our chapter can participate in, including the folks on Alabama's Southern and Eastern borders.

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**ANAGRAMS**

Dormitory: Dirty Room  
Desperation: A Rope Ends It  
Slot Machines: Cash Lost in 'em  
Semolina: Is No Meal  
Eleven and two: Twelve and one  
Contradiction: Accord not in it  
The eyes: They See  
Debit Card: Bad credit  
Astronomer: Moon starrer  
Precalculus: Call up curse  
Conversation: Voices rant on  
Garbage man: Bag manager  
Listen: Silent  
A Shoplifter: Has to pilfer  
Christmas: Trims cash  
Elvis: Lives  
Hot water: Worth tea  
Geologist: Go get oils

**Young Mensan Q & A** (By Kathe Oliver)

New and potential members of Mensa have lots of questions about the organization. This is true of Young Mensans, as well as adults. As a member of Mensa, you may be asked to answer gifted children's questions. Here are their most frequently asked questions about Mensa, with answers.

**Isn't Mensa just for adults?**

No! Young Mensans have been a part of the organization since its early days. There were already enough Young Mensans and interest in gifted children within Mensa that the keynote speech at the 1959 Mensa Annual Gathering in the UK (then the only organized national Mensa) was "The Gifted Child".

That was a year before American Mensa began, but the connection between Mensa and gifted children was already obvious. The first (unsuccessful) attempt to form an American Mensa came after Mensa was contacted by the National Association for Gifted Children, wanting to work together with Mensa on behalf of gifted children.

**What does "Young Mensan" mean?**

"Young Mensans" (aka. "Young Ms" or "YMs") are members of Mensa under the age of 18. The term generally includes high school students even if they have turned 18.

For most purposes, "Young Mensans" also includes the children, grandchildren, and other minor relatives of adult Mensa members, and siblings of Young Ms. They are a part of the Mensa family, even if they are not members in their own right.

**How does someone under age 18 become a member of Mensa?**

All Mensa members meet the same eligibility requirement: a score in the top 2% of a standardized, accepted intelligence test.

Anyone can submit scores from a test that they have already taken, as "prior evidence" of eligibility. A list of common tests and their qualifying scores is given at [www.us.mensa.org/Content/AML/NavigationMenu/Join/SubmitTestScores/QualifyingTestScores/QualifyingScores.htm](http://www.us.mensa.org/Content/AML/NavigationMenu/Join/SubmitTestScores/QualifyingTestScores/QualifyingScores.htm). Applicants age 14 and older can also choose to take tests administered by Mensa.

For more information, go to [www.us.mensa.org/](http://www.us.mensa.org/)

[www.us.mensa.org/Content/AML/NavigationMenu/Join/GiftedYouth/Gifted\\_Youth.htm](http://www.us.mensa.org/Content/AML/NavigationMenu/Join/GiftedYouth/Gifted_Youth.htm), write to American Mensa, Ltd., 1229 Corporate Drive West, Arlington, TX 76006-6103 or call 800-66-MENSA (800-666-3672).

**How old is the youngest Mensan?**

A: Mensa's youngest members joined at age 2.

**Famous adults are sometimes identified as Mensans. Are there any famous Young Mensans?**

The best known Young Mensan is Lisa Simpson of [The Simpsons](http://www.fox.com), who joined in the episode "They Saved Lisa's Brain". She joined adult Mensans including Jeff Albertson (aka. Comic Book Guy), Dr. Julius Hibbert, Principal Seymour Skinner, and Lindsay Naegle in the Springfield local group. Details of Lisa's membership are available at [wikipedia.org/wiki/They\\_Saved\\_Lisa's\\_Brain](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/They_Saved_Lisa's_Brain).

"Real" Young Mensans are active in many areas, and some may qualify as famous. For example, Young Mensans have starred in Broadway shows. However, Mensa protects their privacy, and does not give out their names.

**Are Young Mensans welcome at Mensa events?**

Yes! There are some activities which are adult-only, but members of all ages are welcome at most events. Most local groups also sponsor programs specifically aimed at Young Ms and their families. See the calendar for local events.

Regional Gatherings vary, but since 1996 Annual Gatherings (AGs) have had programs specifically for Young Mensans, as well as events of interest to Mensans of all ages. For information on AG activities for Young Ms, read the [Mensa Bulletin](http://www.us.mensa.org/Bulletin), or visit the 2011 AGreat Journey West website, [www.ag2011.us.mensa.org](http://www.ag2011.us.mensa.org). Join the fun in Portland, Oregon, this summer!

**Are the non-member parents of Young Mensans welcome at Mensa events?**

Parents are welcome to accompany their children to Mensa events. Participation in some events may require parental involvement.

### **What is the role of Young Mensans within Mensa?**

Every member of Mensa, regardless of age, has the same rights as any other member, including the right to vote in international, national, and local group elections.

To a large extent, the role that Young Mensans play in Mensa depends on them (and their parents). Some enjoy membership, but rarely participate. Others are very active.

There are many ways for members to participate in Mensa. For example, some Mensans write for Omen, or the Bulletin. Young Ms can also write for Fred, a quarterly magazine written by and for Young Mensans. Fred publishes book, movie and game reviews, as well as jokes, poems, puzzles, and essays. It is a fun way for Young Mensans to share their ideas. For more information, go to [www.us.mensa.org/Content/AML/NavigationMenu/Programs/GiftedYouth/FredTheMagazine/Fred.htm](http://www.us.mensa.org/Content/AML/NavigationMenu/Programs/GiftedYouth/FredTheMagazine/Fred.htm).

Mensans of any age can put events into their local group calendars. Some become active with events on the national level. TeenSIG was begun by Young Ms at the 2001 Dallas AG. The group has run programming for teens at every Annual Gathering since then, and functions in cyberspace between AGs. The AG Tween Room came from a Young Mensan brainstorming session at the 2007 Birmingham AG, and became a Tween-planned reality at the 2008 Denver AG.

There are virtually no limits to what a member can do within Mensa!

### **Where can I find answers to my questions about Mensa and Young Mensans?**

For general information, go to the American Mensa website, [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org). For local information, contact your Gifted Children's Coordinator. If your local group does not have one, contact your Local Secretary or membership officer.

"Young Mensan Q & A" was adapted from an article written for the February 2011 edition of Omen: The Magazine of Oregon Mensa.

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*Note from the Editor: In our local group, we have ten (10) young members aged from less than 6 years old to 17.*

## **MEMORIES — BY BARBARA HOOVER**



*Benita (L) and Barbara (R) in Gordon, TX*

While sitting back scratching chigger bites, I have to think what in the world were my cousin Benita and I, two ladies in their late 50s, nicely dressed and wearing sandals, doing climbing over a pipe gate into a overgrown field in the middle of nowhere Texas on a fairly warm day in October!

The first answer coming to mind is we don't fit as well as we used to between the stretched strands of barbed wire fence. Secondly, there were no cactus, goatheads or obvious snakes in the dirt ruts running under the gate. It looked safe. But the real reason was the small pointed blades of irises growing just inside the fence line and spreading through the weeds and grass of the old yard.

The homestead where our fathers were born is gone now....torn down to avoid paying taxes on an empty structure. The only indication a house once stood there is the old brick well house, the remnants of a sidewalk from the road to where the front porch used to be and the irises.

Years ago my Uncle Benny and I dug up iris bulbs planted by his mother, my grandmother Odessa, when she was a 16 year-old bride in 1916. He said she had planted them along the sidewalk on a lonely stretch of road there by Mitchell Hill near Gordon, TX. Population 512. There's not much more there now than there was 100 years ago. It's generally dry, quiet and just a little bit wild. It makes me smile to think of my grandmother, a newly married teen-

ager, kneeling on the ground with a spade planting precious bulbs to brighten up that quiet, isolated piece of land.

I've moved several times since planting the bulbs we dug up. Now her irises bloom in a couple of places on Lookout Mountain, Georgia but we moved to Alabama last year. In the spring I asked Benita to drive by to see if there were still bulbs on the old home place....she said the yard, now a field, was full of white blooms.

And so there we were, the first of October, digging up bulbs out of the hard ground. Trowels in hand, with my grandson trying to help while catching grasshoppers, we crouched and chipped at the dirt until we figured out it was easier to dig our hands underneath the loosened sod and pull them up chunks at a time. We filled two large baggies before agreeing we had enough...though we were also starting to feel the effects of the Texas sun.

Because of work being done on our yard, my grandson and I planted the bulbs in a raised bed to wait for spring when we decide where they'll be planted next. Those hardy white irises have spread amazingly over the decades in Texas. Now they're growing in Georgia and Alabama. I wonder where else they'll be growing in another 100 years. I wonder if Odessa knows they're still blooming.

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