

# December



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**Coming Soon: TBM Winter Social!**

**A Publication of  
Tampa Bay Mensa**

*Tampa Bay Sounding* (USPS 305-830)  
Tampa Bay Mensa  
11111 N. 20th Street  
Tampa, FL 33612

Mensa is an international society whose sole qualification for membership is a score at or above the 98th percentile on a standard IQ test. Mensa is a not-for-profit organization whose main purpose is to serve as a means of communication and assembly for its members. All opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors, and not necessarily those of the editors or officers of Mensa. Mensa as an organization has no opinions. Tampa Bay Mensa serves Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, and Sumter counties.

Visit American Mensa at:  
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For full instructions on how to join [tbn-gm](#) and [tbn-discussion](#), our two Yahoo! groups, visit TBM at

<http://tampa.us.mensa.org>

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## Submission Guidelines

*Tampa Bay Sounding* encourages submissions from all members. Submissions must be signed, but names may be withheld or pseudonyms used if requested. All letters to the editor will be subject to publication unless the author specifically requests otherwise. All material submitted will be considered for publication, but nothing can be guaranteed. Everything is subject to editing. Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Articles, casual essays, opinion pieces, poems, short stories, puzzles, and artwork are all encouraged.
- Personal attacks and bigoted, sexist, hateful, or otherwise offensive material will not be published.
- E-mail submissions are preferred, either embedded or in Word-readable attachments. Computer printouts and typewritten pages are fine. If you submit hard copy, please make sure your printer has enough toner or your typewriter has a fresh-enough ribbon. Legible handwritten submissions will be considered (but not given preference).

You may send your submissions by either of the following means:

E-mail: [editor@tampa.us.mensa.org](mailto:editor@tampa.us.mensa.org)

(Please indicate "TBM" in the subject header.)

U.S. Mail: Ronan Heffernan, 27504 Breakers Dr, Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

**Unless otherwise specified in the calendar, the deadline for unsolicited contributions is the fifth day of the month.**

# Welcome to Tampa Bay Mensa!

- \* Garrett Bostwick
- \* Myia Luna Graham
- Steven Fried
- \* Thomas Scales
- \* Nathaniel Hathaway
- Sara Thames
- Emily Langille
- \* New members.

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## December Birthdays

- 12/02 Raymond Celli, Stephen Page
- 12/03 Shawn Dean
- 12/04 Lindsay Claytor, Robert Miller, James Taylor
- 12/06 Susan Dunlevy, Elsa Gallo, Brian Heidman
- 12/07 John Carnahan, Barbara Counts
- 12/08 Kristina Soderstrom
- 12/09 Dorothy Butler
- 12/10 David Hicks, Larry Paradis, Janice Rickert
- 12/11 Elliott Loyless, Joseph Markowitz
- 12/13 Michael Wenditz
- 12/14 Suzanne Fahy
- 12/17 Daniel Chesnut
- 12/18 Geoff LeCain
- 12/20 Thomas Bonner, Sherri Crews-Cohen
- 12/21 Alvin Bedgood
- 12/22 Alan Miller
- 12/24 George Brooks, Joseph Juston, Edwin Kelley, Keith Kelly
- 12/25 Rush Miller, Robert Shackton, Cynthia Weatherby
- 12/26 Lisa Blair, Allen Garber, Corey Merenda
- 12/27 Stephanie Adelson, Juana Harper, John Henderson
- 12/28 Don Davis, Fred LePiere
- 12/29 William Bickner, Denise Chezek
- 12/31 Kenneth Hidu, Jack Kauffman, Les Milewski, Carl Paleveda

## RVC Column for Region 10

On October 17, Executive Director Pam Donahoo announced her resignation as Executive Director of American Mensa, to take a Chief Executive Officer position at another association. Subsequently, the American Mensa Committee (AMC) met on November 1 to discuss next steps. A contingency plan was already in place for any major vacancy at the national office, and a Transition Committee was appointed by AMC Chair LaRae Bakerink, to make recommendations for action at the December 2 AMC Meeting in Houston, TX. All the members of the transition committee have experience in hiring for executive positions.

In the next few months, another major technology transition will occur in American Mensa with the implementation of Higher Logic, and the rollout of Mensa Connect. Mensa Connect will be replacing the existing in-house mailing lists used for Local Group officers and other committees, such as the LocSecs/Presidents, Editors, Membership Officers, and others, as well as the Mensa Community. There will be a presentation to the AMC at the December meeting, followed by testing by some of the existing groups. Once the testing phase has concluded, the function will be rolled out to local groups as well. While many groups have moved to Facebook over the past few years as their main point of connection, this has not been an ideal solution because there are many members who do not have or want Facebook accounts, and feel left out. Because this will hold all your private information internally, unlike Facebook, it will be a more secure way to participate, and will allow us to ensure that only members of Mensa are included in the groups. And since you'll be able to log into the Mensa site to participate, you won't need to join a different social media application.

At a regional level, I'm happy to announce that **Bill Horton** from Central Florida Mensa has joined the American Mensa Community Services Committee. This group works to identify service projects that members can participate in to raise Mensa's profile in the community. Members who participate can qualify for 'Mensa Cares!' t-shirts for their efforts. Projects that have already occurred include Adopt-A-Highway programs, assisting at Food Banks, sprucing up cemeteries, collecting donations for homeless communities, and other projects. This is by no means an exhaustive list of possible projects, and Mensans have shown themselves to be very creative in their proposals!

I had posed a question a few weeks ago on a couple of Mensa Facebook groups, on whether people thought Mensa was a volunteer organization. The responses surprised me, because while I was pondering what makes the organization run (no events are scheduled at the local group level, unless a member volunteers to run it), many thought I was referring to Mensa volunteering in the community - and several were adamantly opposed to the idea that we should require such a thing. But in no way are we suggesting that any member will ever be required to participate in a community program. We don't even require that members volunteer internally. But of course we ENCOURAGE it, at least internally, since we cannot survive as an organization without volunteers.

Until next month (or until I see you online),  
Thomas George Thomas  
Email: [RVC10@us.mensa.org](mailto:RVC10@us.mensa.org)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/thomas.g.thomas](http://www.facebook.com/thomas.g.thomas)  
Twitter: @FardleBear

Hello everyone, I'm Art Schwartz and I'm the new LocSec of Tampa Bay Mensa. For those of you who don't know me, here's a quick introduction:

I moved to the area in 1999 and rejoined Mensa after a long absence in 2010. I have been on the ExComm for about 6 years. My involvement with the group has been primarily attending game nights. I have actively been involved in organizing and helping at events such as picnics, Socials, RGs and game weekends.

I am married, and we have two sons. My younger son David is also a member, and he and my wife Sapir are regulars at game nights and other events. We really enjoy being a part of this group.

I have some goals for the coming year.

- 1 - Increase our membership.
- 2 - Have more fun and interesting events.
- 3 - Encourage members to more actively participate.

I can't accomplish these goals without your help.

The first goal of increasing our membership, I hope to accomplish through actively recruiting new members at local events. We depend on leads provided by the national office, move-ins, and when prospective members contact us to become members. But we have been fairly passive about doing recruitment.

This week I attended Boo Bash, a Halloween event at Spectrum field. It was a great opportunity to speak with interested or curious people, hand out literature, and get our name seen. I hope this will be just the first of many events we attend to raise awareness and recruit.

Can you help us find venues? Would you help staff an event?

The second goal is having more fun and interesting events. We have a new program officer, Lisa Blair, and I am sure she will come up with some ideas. This is an area where we all can help. ANYONE can organize an event. If you like to do some activity, there is a very good chance others in the group will like it too. If you have an idea and want some help, contact Lisa, myself, or Melissa Stephens (kids' events).

Was there something we used to do in the past and you want to start it up again?

The third goal is to get members to be more active. I think we will get more participation by achieving the second goal (more, better events) and by doing a better job at letting everyone know they are happening.

I think it's important that we reach out to our friends in this group who have become "tree-like." We need to get them back to being active members.

I would love to hear from you. I know you have ideas, so please share them at [locsec@tampa.us.mensa.org](mailto:locsec@tampa.us.mensa.org) ■

# Calendar of Events

## December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> » Reading Group	<b>7</b> » Tampa Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> » Oldsmar Games Night with White Elephant Gift Exchange
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> » Tampa Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> » Reading Group	<b>21</b> » Tampa Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> » Tampa Lunch Bunch@ Sweet Tomatoes	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> » Tampa Games Night
<b>31</b>						

For updated event information, check our online calendar: <http://tampa.us.mensa.org/cal>

# December 2017 Calendar

Except for rare cases that hosts will make clear, all events listed in our Calendar of Events, whether hosted in private homes or public venues, are open to all Mensans, their spouses, and accompanied guests.

While kitty amounts are mandatory, hosts often spend far more than the specified amount. Donations in excess of the kitty amount will be appreciated. If you have special needs or restrictions, it is prudent to discuss them with the host in advance.

To add an event to the calendar, send an email with the event details to [calendar@tampa.us.mensa.org](mailto:calendar@tampa.us.mensa.org) including the date, time, place, and host contact information. The deadline for an event to appear in the print newsletter is the 5th of the previous month, but the online calendar can be updated after the print deadline.

## December 6 7pm Reading Group

Location: IHOP, 4910 West Spruce Street, Tampa

Read whatever you like and bring books you'd like to recommend, discuss, exchange, or give away.

Ronan Heffernan 727-537-6626 [ronansan@gmail.com](mailto:ronansan@gmail.com)

## December 7 12:30pm Tampa Lunch Bunch @ Sweet Tomatoes

Location: Sweet Tomatoes on Dale Mabry just South of Bearss

Sweet Tomatoes is an all you can eat salad & soup buffet. Show up at your convenience and join us in the private room off the dining area. Tell the cashier you are there for the Mensa lunch to receive a 15% discount. Non-member spouses or friends are included, too. There is no program for this very informal event, and the conversation is free flowing. Topics range, based on the interests of members, and the backgrounds of participants varies widely, making for interesting discussions. Members are respectful and genuinely interested in listening to each other. New members are always welcomed even if you can't be a regular. Hosted by Dave Bryant; please email him at [SenseiDave@msn.com](mailto:SenseiDave@msn.com) if you have any questions.

## December 9 7pm Oldsmar Games Night with White Elephant Gift Exchange

Location: 651 Timber Bay Circle West, Oldsmar

We play fun board and table games. Snacks and sodas provided (\$3 kitty helps defray refreshment expenses). No pets. No smoking indoors, please.

Sylvia Zadorozny [sylviachocolate@gmail.com](mailto:sylviachocolate@gmail.com) 813-855-4939 (leave message)

## December 14 12:30pm Tampa Lunch Bunch @ Sweet Tomatoes

## December 20 7pm Reading Group

## December 21 12:30pm Tampa Lunch Bunch @ Sweet Tomatoes

## December 28 12:30pm Tampa Lunch Bunch @ Sweet Tomatoes

## December 30 7pm Tampa Games Night

Location: 11111 N 20th St, Tampa, FL 33612, USA

Come play fun board & table games - feel free to bring your favorites! Snacks, sodas, coffee, tea & dinner provided (\$3 kitty helps defray refreshment expenses). My

large game room is on a separate AC and additional tables in the dining and living room areas. I have cats who stay in their bedroom, and two Great Pyrenees who will need a walk or backyard play session, but otherwise, will stay in their room until 10ish. (If you're interested in walking with us, they will love to meet you!) I also have some reptiles and my quaker parrots Jasmine and Lucky may make an appearance. No smoking indoors, please. Carpooling encouraged. Street and driveway parking available.  
Call 813-476-5405 or email [melissalstephens@gmail.com](mailto:melissalstephens@gmail.com)

**Save the Date: The Tampa Bay Mensa Winter Social is on Saturday, January 13, 2018 in Lutz!**

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## TBM Member Book Release

### Hitler, My Father, by Rod Merten

*"Hitler, My Father"* is a novel of World War Two, Hitler's Unknown Lover, and Son. This is Rod Merten's inaugural novel. "I spent over eight years in the writing," he says, "long before all this white supremacy, neo-Nazi KKK crap. My book has nothing to do with those groups."

The story starts in 1938 when an adoring young woman, Lotte Schoener, encounters Adolph Hitler. He demands her company in private, and she becomes pregnant, bearing his child.

Lotte and her son, young Adolf, then endure ostracism from her family and most of the village who refer to them as Hitler's Bitch and Hitler's Bastard. Local characters like Gerta Beyerlein the town gossip; Hans Schuler, former SS death camp guard and a postwar KGB agent; and Erich Schwimmer, a half-Jew kicked out of the SS and sent to Auschwitz add depth to the narrative.

Through the relentless research of the protagonist, history scholar Lorenz Meyer, whose sensitivity and urgency for finding the truth about Hitler's only child, and what it might mean for the future of the world.

*"Hitler, My Father"* is based on facts and documented history with just enough creativity to make the story fascinating.

The book is published by Parkhurst Brothers and is available at all bookstores, online booksellers and direct from the author at: [www.rodmerten.com](http://www.rodmerten.com). ■

All opinions expressed are those of the individual authors. Mensa as an organization expresses no opinions. Members are encouraged to submit opposing points of view, as indicated in the Submission Guidelines on page 2.

I imagine this type of thing happens frequently in a divorce, where both parents try to buy their children's affections with ever increasing gifts - beyond what can be sustained.

The same problem is plaguing America, as our two political parties engage in a bidding war to spend ever-increasing sums of money on disaster relief. Starting with Hurricane Katrina, the residents of New Orleans, who've known for a century that a major hurricane could threaten their existence, were told pointedly to evacuate the city - a state and local matter. New Orleans was supposedly evacuated as reported, except for the thousands of residents who ignored the warnings and fled to the apparent safety of a football stadium, some with little more than a can of beer. The images afterward were quite shocking, desperate people clinging to submerged houses, flotsam, and the like. Reports of rampant crime in the stadium, though exaggerated, were compelling, and someone had to accept responsibility. Naturally, the blame for Katrina fell on George W Bush, along with predictable accusations of racism. Left wing websites suggested Bush had somehow steered the hurricane into the city, just as he'd blown up the World Trade Center, I presume.

Since then, no politician wants to be similarly pilloried by the media, and every disaster has become a bidding war between the parties - as happened when Superstorm Sandy hit the Northeast coast. Another storm, which had been predicted for decades, somehow caught them all by surprise and unprepared. I will never forget Republican Chris Christie's vulgar and obscene demands for Federal money, without any suggestion of accountability or oversight. The eventual picture of Christie and Obama walking together as the funds came through from the Republican-controlled congress may well have helped Obama's re-election effort, but certainly didn't help the Federal Treasury nor the National Debt.

This year, in October 2017, a Federal Disaster relief bill just sailed through the Republican-controlled Congress to cover three storms, affecting primarily Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. The amount is 36 billion dollars (that's 36,000 million dollars), which has been added to our National Debt, and I have to ask: Weren't most of the homes in the United States already covered by insurance, which is mandatory in flood zones? Do the power companies not have their own reserves and insurance? The insurance companies in this area haven't paid many storm claims in the past ten years, so shouldn't they have had a healthy reserve? Shouldn't the states and municipalities involved have had their own emergency funds? Or is the Federal Government just expected to cover everyone and everything?

Since the Puerto Rican hurricane, we've seen the democrats predictably grandstanding, making accusations of racism and inadequate funding. However, even



## Mensaversaries

48 years Betty Taylor

40 years John Kane

38 years John Emerson, William Forister

27 years Susan Anderson

24 years Michael Clifford, John Henderson

21 years John Olmstead

20 years Eric Harrison, Tanya Stay, Morgan Tyler

18 years Michael Garrett, Lana LaForest

17 years Ronald Dubs

16 years Dennis Wilcoxon

11 years Cassandra Cox, Brian Ourso

9 years Kee Lee, Michele Mourer, Thomas Richards

8 years Cheryl Pohley, Steven Woolheater

7 years Belinda Nemeth, Ralph Pritchard

6 years Sophia Hachey, Summer Haura

5 years Calvin Gross, Lucy Haura, Jack Kauffman, Helena Panuthos, Charles Traenkner, Alexander Zicchino

4 years Rodney Phillips

3 years Don Chase, Firman King, Sarah Langevin-Gaspar, Bradley McDonald, Naren Vazrala, Berkeley Wonder

2 years Madisyn Collins, Erica Enfinger, Sebastian Philipson

1 year Jacob Kesler, Kathryn Korstanje, Su'ad Macedonio

Note: Years are for continuous membership. Members who let their membership lapse start from the date of reinstatement.

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## Mommy Loves You More (cont)

before the storm, that small island nation, run by Democrats for decades, had already accumulated 74 billion dollars of debt – mostly spent buying votes from unions. They've destroyed their own credit rating, cannot borrow any more money, and – like it or not – transformers, power lines, and building supplies cost money that no amount of US aid can cover.

Ask where all this money goes, and you'll be insulted as heartless toward your fellow Americans, but nothing's more heartless than watching the nation's currency devalued with reckless spending. We've no shortage of borrowed money in America but we clearly have a chronic shortage of reasonable politicians, who can work together in the best interest of the nation. ■

# Boo Bash!

Tampa Bay Mensa made an appearance (in costume!) at Boo Bash, at Spectrum Field in St Pete, on Halloween.



We used this event to promote our group. Flyers, brochures, and business cards were distributed. Our banner was on display and we had our group announced over the PA system as a sponsor.



We also spoke to individuals who expressed a interest in Mensa. (No interested parties were eaten by zombies, not even these adorable snack-sized ones.) ■

# Letter to the Editor

All opinions expressed are those of the individual authors. Mensa as an organization expresses no opinions. Members are encouraged to submit opposing points of view, as indicated in the Submission Guidelines on page 2.

Dear Editor,

I'm sorry we haven't yet met. I'm newly returned to Mensa after many years. As a former editor myself (Central Florida's *Flame*, many years ago) I appreciate the importance of the role.

Your October issue was the first local newsletter I've read in a while. I was disappointed and surprised by the publication of the rant by Mr. Dubs.

It's easy to take a few undisputed, verifiable truths, then sprinkle in some suspicion, some false equivalencies, unstated premises, and a few outright fallacies, and thus drum up some good old righteous indignation. It's even kind of fun. Who doesn't like a bit of ranting and name-calling? Don't mistake that for serious debate, though.

I wouldn't have thought it was suitable for a Mensa publication, either. Mensa is apolitical, and you would think that our organization could contribute something more to a controversy, like thoughtful research, analysis and discussion, rather than more half-baked emotional vitriol.

If last month's article didn't offend you, this one probably will. *They both should*. We don't need to be delicate snowflakes, and I don't think we need a trigger warning. As Mensans, we may fall anywhere along the political spectrum. However, our common characteristic, and interest, should put us above this level of discussion. If you can't tell the difference between an emotional rant and a logical argument, maybe your high IQ isn't your strong suit.

But hey, if that's what we're doing for fun today...

## *You Could, In Fact, Be a Leftist Anarchist*

If you disagree with *self-described* white supremacists, white nationalists, neo-Confederates, and neo-Nazis, who show up, heavily armed, to protest a local decision to remove a confederate statue, you must be a bleeding-heart, leftist anarchist. If you take note that one of those protesters ran down and killed a woman with his car, you're also overly sensitive.

If you think that inner city racial unrest could use a little publicity, so it can be dealt with, and don't believe that not talking about it makes it magically go away, you're clearly a leftist anarchist.

If you think that it's beneath the dignity of our political discourse to circulate blatantly false chain mails and internet memes suggesting a black president wasn't born in the US, or is a Muslim, or that liberals are gathering at pizza shops to molest your kids, or that there's been some sort of murder cover-up if anyone on any staff happens to die, you're probably just a snowflake leftist anarchist.

If you think that all our minority citizens are, in fact, citizens, and shouldn't be shot down, unarmed, in the streets, by cops who think black plus male equals dangerous animal, then you're clearly an anti-cop leftist anarchist. If you think there *is* a common set of American values, and they don't necessarily include being 

## Letter to the Editor (cont)

white, English-speaking and Christian, you must also be a tool of some shadowy global cabal.

If you are concerned about how much money George Soros has spent on our national politics, but also concerned about how much has been spent by others, like the Koch brothers, oil companies and the Russian government, then you're not properly focused and it's probably because you're a leftist anarchist.

If you think blind trust in any institution, governmental or otherwise, is risky, but won't trust a partisan commission with states' voter rolls when they were nice enough to ask, you're clearly a delusional, leftist anarchist.

If you think our laws *are* based on the US Constitution, and that there's little evidence of any serious effort to base laws on the Koran or the UN, but there's enough influence from people who know "how things oughtta be" and Christian groups that I can't buy beer on Sunday morning, you're a leftist anarchist, and probably a Muslim terrorist.

If you think we're a nation of immigrants, who should treat immigrants with dignity, who's all for defending our borders but not for pretending to do so with silly walls and such... If you can't help but notice how concern increases when the immigrants in question are brown... well, you're just an un-American leftist anarchist.

If you aren't worried enough about global corporations, world banks, and tech giants, don't even make your own tin foil hats, and have the naiveté to notice that most of these fearsome giants are all or mainly run by our own country, you're just a tool of the dark underworld... and a leftist anarchist.

If you believe that elections, by and large, *are* conducted fairly, and insist on at least some pesky evidence before you conclude that millions are voting more than once, or voting without citizenship, you're a leftist anarchist. If, without that evidence, you have the nerve to question the motives of those who keep pretending there's an issue, well, then you're an uppity leftist anarchist.

If you expect the Federal government to print money *because it's their job*, and register your firearm because there's absolutely no way the government can get all America's guns out of civilian hands even if some mysterious, unnamed "them" wanted to, then you're a leftist anarchist and somehow, at the same time, a government lackey.

If you, for some unfathomable reason, don't get all your news from Twitter, your friends on Facebook, and political ads, you're a leftist anarchist. If you can't conflate having your own email server with selling national secrets, while at the same time ignoring outright leaking to Russian ambassadors in the Oval, or another president's administration outing an active undercover CIA agent, then your understanding is clearly clouded by your leftist anarchism.

If you believe that a "mysterious murder" is just that, but that Seth Rich's death is only "mysterious" to those with an agenda? Not his own family? Not Fox News, who retracted and apologized for the story? You leftist anarchists simply lack faith.

If standing up for free speech, national borders, the Second Amendment, equality under the law, and honest fact-based journalism could make me a neo-Nazi, I'd own it. It doesn't, though, any more than it makes me a leftist anarchist.

I'm not either of those things, and those aren't even *close* to being the only two choices.

Sincerely, Chris Cain

# On This Month in History: December

*Emma Edmund*

On December 16, 1773, a group of colonists thinly disguised as Indians raided three ships in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 chests of tea into the water. The Boston Tea Party, as it came to be known, was a protest against the Tea Tax, the latest protest of British taxation on the American colonies. The cost of the dumped tea, with inflation, would be over a million dollars today.

Birthdays in this month include Johannes Kepler on December 27, 1571, and Britney Spears on December 2, 1981. Kepler was a German astronomer whose laws of planetary motion, including the discovery that planetary orbits were elliptical, improved upon Nicolaus Copernicus' heliocentric theory. Spears is an American recording artist and entertainer whose hit songs include "Toxic," "...Baby One More Time" and "Womanizer."

Source: On This Day: The History of the World in 366 Days

Answer to the November Cryptopoem:

*Will there really be a morning?  
Is there such a thing as day?  
Could I see it from the mountains  
If I were as tall as they?*

*Has it feet like water-lilies?  
Has it feathers like a bird?  
Is it brought from famous countries  
Of which I have never heard?*

*Oh, some scholar! Oh, some sailor!  
Oh, some wise man from the skies!  
Please to tell a little pilgrim  
Where the place called morning lies!*

- Emily Dickinson, "Morning"

# 2017-2018 Tampa Bay Mensa Officers

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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