

While the Annual Gathering is always a favorite event of mine, each year brings a new aspect that is a highlight. As the current chair of the Leadership Development Committee, I have a great interest in the Leadership Development Workshops held throughout the week. This year's LDWs covered every topic from community volunteering with your local group to third-party apps that can make administering local groups easier. These presentations will be available in the next week or two on the national website at <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/leadership-workshops/>. I want to thank all of the volunteers and members of our staff who contributed to these programs. It is my hope that local groups from around the country will be able to take the information presented and use it to help their own chapters thrive.

One of the events that is held at each year's AG is the Awards Ceremony. Local groups, CultureQuest teams, and individuals are recognized at this event. I was thrilled to see Region 6 well represented across the board this year.

The top 20 CultureQuest teams in the country not only receive bragging rights, but also earn money for their local groups. The Jolie Brains of Baton Rouge Mensa placed 12th overall.

The Jewel Awards recognize local groups that actively participate in a wide range of Mensa activities. There are five classes of group, based on population size, and within each class, a local group can achieve Emerald, Sapphire, or Ruby status, with Ruby being the highest. In addition, the local group that ranks highest within its class is named the Diamond Group of the year.

There were six Emerald groups in Region 6 – Northern Louisiana Mensa, Eastern Oklahoma Mensa, Central Oklahoma Mensa, New Orleans Mensa, Gulf Coast Mensa, and North Texas Mensa. Paso del Norte Mensa was recognized as a Sapphire group.

For the second year in a row, a member of Region 6 was named Gifted Youth Coordinator of the Year. Bill Rock of North Texas Mensa was recognized for superior service as a Gifted Youth Coordinator and for contributing to the growth of programs that serve gifted youth and/or Young Mensans.

Don't forget that LoneStaRG 20 is just around the corner. Join your fellow Ms to visit, laugh, and reflect on What a Long Strange Trip It's Been. This annual party will be held this August 31-September 3 at the Wingate by Wyndham in Round Rock, TX You can learn more about the RG and register online at <http://www.lonestarmensa.org/lonestarg-20.html>.

As always, I ask that if you have any questions, concerns, or general comments, please let me know. I have created a simple online form where members can offer feedback on any topic, both by name or anonymously. You can find this form at <http://tinyurl.com/AML-R6-Feedback>. Of course, if you prefer, you can always contact me via email at [rvc6@us.mensa.org](mailto:rvc6@us.mensa.org) or phone at 512-779-3945.

Taz Criss