

## The Kids' Table

by

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In a Mensa chapter far, far away, there was a hush followed by a huge cosmic boom. We Gen Xers had been functioning under the mistaken belief that the only thing that bound us together was our ages. (Our loose definition is anyone born between during 1961-1981. There is no trivia test, but you should have had at least one bad 1980s hairdo. Ugly glasses are also acceptable.) In this we were wrong. Most of the Gen X members are card carrying geeks.

The original definition of a geek is a side show performer with no qualms about biting the heads off live chickens. I know this because it's referenced in a book called Sideshow by Robert Bogdan. This is a book that I have in my voluminous personal library. Having a book on such an obscure subject is one thing. That I can reference it at will is a tad disturbing. My familiarity with the performers in both sideshows and in the movie Freaks is just plain odd. That I started a collection of photographs of sideshow performers is the final proof that I am a geek. And only the biggest geek would admit to a hobby in such poor taste. My defense: we can't all be into science fiction.

Last year the Gen X group became passionately interested in a variety of free online personality tests. At least 15 local members submitted to the Friends on [www.emode.com](http://www.emode.com). We put our "Friends" name on our AG name badges, prompting confusion in those without televisions. That wasn't good enough. Later we needed to know which character we were most like on The X Files, The Simpsons, and Sex in the City. (I am not Carrie, thank you very much. The test was skewed.) In preparation for the 2003 AG, I found a Looney Tunes personality test. (This was to help AG

attendees to pick their character for the costume ball.) During April several people submitted to the Purity Test on thespark.com. There is no need to point out who is the purest of us all. (One of our more impure members wrote me an e-mail complaining that test was skewed. He was hoping to score in the most depraved 2%, breaking the Mensa barrier, so to speak.)

This was all fun, but it sort of skirted around a big issue. The answer was an e-mail away. A member of the Society for Creative Anachronism sent me what was billed as THE ULTIMATE GEEK TEST: <http://innergeek.us/geek.html>. It promised to brand the taker as someone with geekish tendencies, a geek, a total geek, a major geek, a super geek, an extreme geek, a geek god, or a dysfunctional geek. What was nice was how it branched out the definition of a geek beyond the math/computer/science/science fiction realm. Knowing five or more hosts on The Food Network contributes to one's score, as does solving a Rubik's cube, participating on a game show, attending band camp, and watching DVDs for the bonus features. Earning a Ph.D. contributes to the geek score, but not earning an MD, JD, or Ed.D. There is no explanation for the inclusion of any items. If you want to debate an item on the geek test, you can complain to the designer. That is sure to be included on the next version.

Every person who reads the MAAM will receive points on this geek test. Both testing for Mensa and joining Mensa will give one points towards the geek rating.

Sensing that the Gen X group would have no qualms about taking a 13-page geek test, it was sent to 25 people. (Yes, there are more of us, but I only like to send e-mail to people I know. Should you want to be included in future worthless surveys, e-mail me at [VeggHead@aol.com](mailto:VeggHead@aol.com).) Fully 13 completed the test. Here are the results:

Range of Scores: 11.8%--46%.

The Average geek score: 24.6%--Total Geek.

Test takers were asked to point out questions that were most pertinent to their geek score. Here is a sample:

Married to a geek.

Dating a geek.

Having a job that requires geekiness.

Can count in hexadecimal.

Have quoted Yoda in conversations or debate.

Have participated on academic teams.

Destroyed things to see how they work.

Named pets after a technical term.

Have engaged in long Mac vs. PC debates.

Can name 10+ chemical elements.

And my personal favorite question: I like music that no one listens to, ever.

Here is the nice thing about both being a geek and being a Mensan. No matter what, I won't judge you. The Gen X group won't judge you.

"We accept you. We accept you. One of us. One of us."

(That's a quote from the movie Freaks. But you already knew that, didn't you?)