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## Region 1 Roundup

By Ian Randal Strock

It's the end of May as I'm writing this, which means the Mets aren't (yet) mathematically eliminated; they're still playing basketball and hockey (but without the Knicks or Rangers), and they'll soon be reporting for football summer camp. But do you care? Not in this publication. Here, it's always the season for Mensa.

I haven't taken office yet, but outgoing RVC Lisa Maxwell has graciously allowed me to write this column, which for most of you will be appearing in your July newsletter, days after I take office on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Lisa (as the new Secretary of American Mensa), I (as your new RVC), and the rest of the AMC (American Mensa Committee; the national board of directors) will be meeting in Hollywood, Florida, at the American Mensa Annual Gathering (AG). And if you're reading this before July 5, 2017, there's still time for you to attend (though you've missed out on all the "purchase early and save" deals). I know, Florida in the middle of the summer is not an appealing concept, but two thousand Mensans sharing five days of camaraderie, games, intellectual pursuits, dancing, socializing, and all the other treats of a Mensa gathering should certainly make up for the heat.

And following the AG, we fall back into RG season, and I'll be taking full advantage of it. There's Metro Washington's Pandemic (not in Region 1, but still a good time), and then Mensa of Northeast New York (Albany)'s RechaRGe. Regional Gatherings are, to me, one of the big good parts of Mensa membership: an entire weekend of Mensa activities, an escape from the regular world, a great time (although I still haven't figured out why I pay for a hotel room for the entire weekend, when I spend so

little time actually asleep in the bed). Over the years, I've noticed an evolution in RGs. When I first started attending them, the focal point was Hospitality, which was usually bifurcated into the Non-Smoking Hospitality room and the Smoking Hospitality room. But as smoking has decreased, those two places to gather and talk while eating and drinking have merged into just one Hospitality suite. Of late (especially at larger RGs and the AG), Hospitality has been fracturing as Gen X and Gen Y and other sub-groups are hosting their own Hospitality rooms. To a degree, I find that disappointing, since it is splitting the group from the unity of Mensans we were into subgroups of Mensans. On the other hand, if it makes attendance more appealing to new members, more fun and less stressful for those who'd rather mix with similar people, then it's great. Another big change I've noticed is the ascendancy of gaming at our Gatherings: board games, card games, strategy games, you name it. Friendly competition enabling us to exercise different parts of our brains. And of course, different Gatherings have differing emphases on speakers, but you can always find a fascinating speaker with a fascinating topic, whether they're on the official program or not.

As I'm writing this, I'm the RVC-elect, but I didn't have to campaign for the post, so you may not have learned as much about my goals for the position as you might in a normal campaign. My aim as RVC is to return Mensa to being a volunteer organization run by and for the members, to increase the Mensa flavor of what's happening. If you have other ideas for what ought to be done, I welcome your input. After all, the RVC is a split position. On the one hand, the RVC's job is to back-stop the regional volunteers, make sure all the local groups are doing all they can. On the other hand, the RVC is your representative on the AMC, the national board of directors.

I'm enthused by the resurgence in interest of younger members in Greater New York Mensa (my local group), and hope to see it echo around the region. The combination of older experience and younger enthusiasm is what makes Mensa successful—familiar and constantly new.

Thank you, Lisa, for your service, your term as Regional Vice Chairman. I look forward to serving on the AMC with you.

Note: In future columns, I expect I'll transition back to a format similar to what Lisa used these last two years. But for this introductory column, I wanted to do something different.

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