

Region 1 Roundup
by Ian Randal Strock
Region 1 RVC
(written February 28, 2018)

Looking back at my past columns, I realized I've reported on a lot of local group difficulties. But I don't want you to think we are riddled with such problems. Actually, those difficulties have been confined to just a few of our local groups. Most of our groups (serving the vast majority of our Region 1 members) are humming along, with a selection of wonderful local events each month and great feelings of camaraderie. In just the last four weeks, I've been invited to dinners, book discussions, breakfasts, trivia nights, and several other fascinating-sounding events. And though I haven't been able to make it outside my own local group this month (except for an RG, see below), I intend to get to as many of those events in the coming months as I can. And you should look around, not just in your own local group, but in neighboring groups, too. After all, the biggest benefit we get from our Mensa membership is the ability to meet and interact with each other. Those few problems loom large in my role as RVC, but for most members, they shouldn't have any effect on your enjoyment of Mensa.

This coming weekend, the AMC has our quarterly business meeting (this time, in Denver, Colorado). The big item on our agenda is the budget for the 2018-19 year. I sat in on the Finance Committee's meeting that put that budget together, and I think it's fair. It's a \$4.5 million budget, with a projected surplus of about \$20,000, and by the time you read this, it should be available for your perusal on the web site. Also on the agenda is a proposal to make guest memberships available to members of other national Mensas, allowing them to participate in all American Mensa activities (other than voting). I'll report on the results next month.

Around the region, during the last month, I attended New Hampshire Mensa's Regional Gathering. This is a long-running RG (their first was in 1990 or 1991), and I used to be a regular. But I haven't been there in quite a while, because the RG is held over Presidents' Day weekend, the same weekend as Boskone (a major science fiction convention in Boston that I attend as part of my publishing activities). This year, as the new RVC, I felt I owed my allegiance to the Mensa convention, and skipped the business. The RG was just as good as I remember them being: a great bunch of people spending the weekend enjoying each other's company and conversation, eating and drinking, playing games and listening to fascinating speakers, sleeping way too little and laughing an awful lot. Something that used to be a fixture of our RGs was a charity auction, to raise funds for local scholarships and/or for the Mensa Foundation. Joe Zanca (one of my predecessors as RVC) was an excellent auctioneer, and the driving force behind those auctions. But when he died, we stopped having them. In New Hampshire, I served as auctioneer for what was a proof-of-concept attempt to revive these charity auctions, and I think it went very well (satisfied bidders, the donors of merchandise were pleased, and New Hampshire Mensa brought in some cash for its scholarship fund).

Remember, the newsletters (and calendars) from your nearby local groups are available to you on the Mensa web site (from the main us.mensa.org web site, pull down the "Read" tab and click on "Local Group newsletters"), and I urge you to share your events with those surrounding

groups' calendar editors. Keep up to date with the latest goings on in the region in Region 1's Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188180494045/>

Upcoming Region 1 Regional Gatherings:

Maine Mensa's Fun & Games mini-RG in Portland, Maine (April 27-29): for more info, contact LocSec Anne Allen at durhamme@yahoo.com.

Boston Mensa's Cape Cod mini-RG (which over the years has been outgrowing the "mini" label) in Dennis Port, Massachusetts (May 11-13): for more info, see <https://cape.bostonmensa.org/>.

And registration and hotel reservations are open for this year's Annual Gathering, in Indianapolis, Indiana (July 4-8). For all the details, and to join American Mensa's big annual get-together, see <http://ag.us.mensa.org/>

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Glossary:

AMC: American Mensa Committee, the national board of directors

RVC: Regional Vice Chairman, a member of the AMC with responsibility for a specific region of American Mensa

Region 1: The northeast region of American Mensa, comprising New England, Northern New Jersey, and most of New York

AG: American Mensa's once-a-year five-day Annual Gathering, featuring the Annual Business Meeting, more than a hundred speakers, and more than a thousand Mensans.

RG: Regional Gathering: a weekend-long get-together hosted by a local group featuring speakers, games, events, and more with 100–400 of your closest friends you haven't met yet.