

Region 1 Roundup
by Ian Randal Strock
Region 1 RVC
(written June 30, 2018)

I recently received an email from a member who said, in part, “I don’t usually read the RVC column that’s published in my local group’s monthly newsletter...” This reminded me that every issue of every newsletter is somebody’s first. Whether you’re a new member, a transfer, or you’ve just not been reading it before, but for some reason, you decided to read this one. And that’s fine. Odds are, as a new reader, you’re probably going to see something in the newsletter you don’t understand: an inside joke, the continuation of an ongoing discussion, or a reference to something that happened last month or three decades ago. It’s not there because we’re trying to exclude you: it’s just that we’ve been doing this so long that we sometimes forget. And if you find that confusing thing, don’t feel left out: contact your editor or locsec, the person who wrote it or the event host. We’d love to tell you what’s going on, and encourage you to attend an event, write a response, get involved. Actually, that’s one of the reasons I attach a glossary to each of my columns: Mensa is a web of abbreviations and acronyms, and we frequently use them without remembering that newer members don’t understand them. (If you’re not seeing that glossary, your editor may have cut it this month to save space. Feel free to email me for the full text of this column.)

Back to my correspondent, who went on to reference my June column, saying “I have been puzzled by my generation’s absence from [my local group]. I’m glad to read that you’ve gained some insight into how young Mensans’ participation in Mensa differs from that of older Mensans. I’d like to know more about your discoveries.” First, I wasn’t writing about young Mensans (usually defined as teenagers and younger; that’s a different issue). I was writing about Young Adult Mensans (YAMs: there’s one of those pesky acronyms) planning events that in many years of membership, I’d never thought of hosting or attending. In New York City, we’ve had fancy-dress cocktail parties and a variety of—not age-limited, but age-encouraged—events aimed at that specific segment of the membership. The Central New Jersey group (in Region 2) has hosted high-brow scotch tastings. At the last few AGs and RGs, I’ve noticed that the YAMs may disappear from the general-interest parts of the event to enjoy it in smaller groups. And while my historical view of Gatherings has always been “one monolithic event for all attendees,” I think that segmenting may be a feature of Mensa’s maturing. Mensa is no longer a shiny new thing that we’re trying to define; it has become an all-encompassing tent under which various subsets can find their own ways.

My correspondent also said, “I wonder what can be done to be more inviting to young adult Mensans.” I think, in general, we’re doing it: offering that big tent in which they can meet like-minded people, and continuing to be the welcoming organization we’ve been all along. The problem is that—unlike when I joined—most of the new YAMs may attend an event and, seeing no one else in their age range, not return. When I joined, I didn’t care about age, so I stuck around, even though I was the youngest by at least twenty years. The problem for new members today is to have a critical mass of their age-mates, and that’s not an easy fix; it’s just something that will have to evolve, as we remain welcoming to all new members, and do our best not to

scare them off when they do venture out to meet us at an event.

The segmenting of the membership, the growth of the age-based subdivisions at the Gatherings, makes me think the “a member is a member is a member” attitude may be shifting. But I’m not saying there’s any one right way to enjoy your Mensa membership, or that one group are better members than others. Merely that Mensa is an organization that serves as a means of contact and communication among its members, who are then free to participate and enjoy it as they see fit.

The AG starts in a few days (as I write this). I’ll be there, participating in the AMC meeting, the Annual Business Meeting, several national committee meetings, the Region 1 Meet-and-Greet, the guerrilla-scheduled HQ Trivia Meet-Up, and my own talk on the presidents on Saturday night. I’ll have news of the business transacted there next month.

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:

Mensa of Northeastern New York’s RechaRGe, in Albany, New York (August 31–September 3). For more info, see <https://mensaofnortheasternny.wordpress.com>.

Boston Mensa’s Wicked Good! 2018, in Fitchburg, Massachusetts (October 26–28). For more info, see <https://rg.bostonmensa.org/>.

—Ian Randal Strock
917-755-6935
RVC1@us.mensa.org

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.

ExCom: Executive Committee, in some groups known as Board of Directors: the members who have volunteered and been elected to take care of the day-to-day business of operation a local group. The local group version of the AMC.

LocSec: Local Secretary, aka president: the elected leader of a local group (the name comes from our British roots)

YM: Young Mensan: teenaged members and those younger
YAM: Young Adult Mensan: members in their 20s and 30s