

Region 1 Roundup  
by Ian Randal Strock  
Region 1 RVC  
(written July 25, 2018)

Early this month was our Annual Gathering: a five-day celebration of Mensa and Mensans. There was ample socializing time, fascinating speakers, and a lot of the business of running this 50,000-person organization was transacted. I was there as your representative on the American Mensa Committee (our national board of directors), and spent a lot of hours in those business meetings, so let me share with you some of what happened. (For the personal aspects of the AG, I posted a fairly long write-up on my personal blog on July 11.)

“How Can Mensa Be Improved?” was a session held in the debates track, but took the form of an open forum for members to make suggestions. Some I noted were: a request for better support for new local volunteers [if you’re a new volunteer and feel like you don’t have the tools you need, contact your locsec or me]; a suggestion to run more member news and chapter news in the national *Bulletin* [I agree, and it may be in the works]; local groups hosting events “sponsored by Mensa” for the general public; and offering new members a rebate on the testing fee when they actually join [we’ll need to gather some data to see if it’s feasible or productive].

The national Communications Committee held a meeting during which we discussed the ACE awards. One member of the committee talked about an app her local group has, which notifies members of upcoming events that are geographically close to them, which caught my interest. Someone made a suggestion of creating an app for a local group’s calendar of events, and there was some discussion of finding ways to change local newsletters from printed publications which spawn electronic versions, to things which start out as electronic productions, as a way to encourage members to shift to electronic subscriptions. Shifting to electronic saves the organization money, but I’m still not completely convinced that dropping print newsletters will not lead to decreased participation. It’s an evolving world, and I welcome your input.

The AMC meeting Thursday was the longest and most contentious since I took office. But I chalk up that contention to actual debate and differing opinions; in other words, exactly what a deliberative body should be doing. The agenda and (when they’re available) minutes are available on the web site at [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org) (click Read, scroll down to Board Meeting Reports, and then select 2018-07-05 — Indianapolis, IN). Some highlights from the meeting: I was appointed chairman of the Licensing Committee; following the resignation of Region 8’s RVC, we appointed a regional coordinator to serve out that term; we decided to hold the 2022 Annual Gathering in Reno, Nevada (during the previous term, the AMC set the forthcoming AGs in Phoenix [2019], Kansas City [2020], and Houston [2021]). We also heard presentations from our public relations firm, the Governance Review Task Force, the Strategic Planning Committee, and a report on lapsed members.

The Annual Business Meeting featured the reports from Chairman LaRae Bakerink, Treasurer Deb Stone, Mensa Education & Research Foundation President Marie Mayer, and Executive Director Trevor Mitchell. There was no unfinished business carried over from last year, and no

newly proposed motions this year.

The Region 1 Meet and Greet was much more of me talking than I'd expected, but I think that was due to the fact that most of the people in the room already knew each other: we're a much more cohesive region than the others. (Although I did meet a few new people there, which was great!)

The Foundation Reception was a fancy-dress event to recognize donors to the Foundation, and several of this year's award winners (see the five-page article in the July issue of the *Bulletin*). It was followed by the Gala Banquet and Speaker (also a fancy-dress event), and a masked ball.

The Awards Ceremony was just what it sounds like. But to my mind, there are far too many awards, so that they all tend to blend and lose any sense of importance. There should be a three-page article listing them in the August *Bulletin*. Several of our local groups won Jewel Awards for participation and activity.

The session on the Changing Face of Regional Gatherings, facilitated by our own Lori Norris, was a discussion on what can be done to host an RG, what has been done in the past, and how changes in the world around us have forced us to change the way we do things. Our Region 1 RGs are very well established, but I think there's room in the calendar for more. Talk with me or Lori if you're looking for help getting one going.

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](http://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/>.

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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.

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