

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

Last month was filled with Mensa travels. This month, the bulk of my Mensa efforts were an RG, a bit of national marketing, and pre-meeting discussions.

I started the month at Mensa of Northeastern New York's RechaRGe Regional Gathering, a really good one. One of the reasons I like it so much is that it runs four days, rather than the usual three. Things start on Friday, Saturday is a full day, and then at most Gatherings, Saturday night winds down and you realize the RG is basically over. But at RechaRGe, as Saturday night winds down and you head to bed, you realize you still have an entire day of RG yet to come. Makes it a much more intense and enjoyable experience! If only every weekend could be four days. At the RG, I hosted the RG meet-and-greet, discussing the business of Mensa with a whole flock of interested members, including First Vice Chairman Lori Norris (from Rhode Island), and then attended Mid-Hudson's Bill Zigo's talked about SIGHT—the Service of Information, Guidance and Hospitality to Travelers—of which he is the national coordinator. There were one-on-one conversations all weekend, and continuing discussions of the issues raised at the Annual Gathering, which culminated in four motions that appeared on the agenda for the AMC meeting held at the end of September.

Those motions are attempts to codify methods of controlling or ameliorating bad behavior by members, and helping members feel safe from those bad behaviors. The discussion and motions were knee-jerk reactions to a few specific incidents, but the legislation which will come out of those discussions will be—we hope—more reasoned and effective in the longer term. Thus, the motions were referred to committee for that in-depth discussion. Rest assured, these issues are not being swept under the rug, but are receiving the attention they deserve.

Also at the meeting, Marie Mayer (President of the Mensa Foundation) announced that “The Mensa Foundation closed on the sale of the building at 1229 Corporate Dr W, in mid-September. An official statement will be released... in a couple weeks.” When American Mensa was founded, in 1960, our office was Margot Seitelman's kitchen table, in Brooklyn, New York. Later, the organization expanded, and the office moved to an office building in Brooklyn. In the 1990s, the costs of renting that office grew, and a member-driven push to buy a building took hold. The office was moved to Texas, and soon thereafter (about twenty years ago, now), we bought that building in Arlington, Texas. Now, we're shifting to a new phase for American Mensa's office space (though probably staying in the same area). Stay tuned.

Oh, and I mentioned some national marketing, didn't I? Well, in addition to October being National Testing Month (with a discount offered on the price of taking the Mensa exam, and you did get your code to invite a friend to take the test for free, didn't you?), American Mensa is sponsoring five episodes of the NPR radio game show *Ask Me Another*. The show is taped in Brooklyn, about five miles from my house. NPR and Mensa have been in discussions for years over some sort of collaboration, and this deal finally materialized and made sense to both of us.

As I write this, they've already taped the first two episodes (the first of those was released as a podcast on Friday, September 28, and aired that weekend). Our first episode's guest was activist DeRay Mckesson. The second was musician Jill Sobule and comedian Tom Arnold. I and several members of Greater New York Mensa have been staffing the shows, offering promotional material and talking with audience members at the tapings. It's an interesting experience. And if you listen closely, you can hear a group of Mensans laughing and applauding somewhere in the background. Check out the show at <https://www.npr.org/programs/ask-me-another/>, or on your NPR radio station.

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"). Also, if your group didn't publish one of my columns, check out those newsletters; another group may have published it. 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:

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

New Hampshire Mensa's RG 2019: The Library at the End of the Universe in Portsmouth, New Hampshire (February 15–17). For more info, see <http://nh.us.mensa.org/rgnews.php>.

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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