

1Region 1 Roundup  
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Region 1 RVC  
(written January 1, 2019)

December was a fairly slow month in terms of Mensa business, after the December 1<sup>st</sup> AMC teleconference (which I reported on in my last column). The only scheduled events I had were the Greater New York Mensa holiday party (my own local group) and a conference call with the national office staff in my role as head of the Licensing Committee. The party was wonderful, as always. It's always good to get together in real life with Mensans I've known for a long time, those I've recently met, and those I'm meeting for the first time. As always, I urge you to make as much effort as you can to really take advantage of all Mensa has to offer. You may find some fascinating new friends, as I did.

I recently got a call from a member in Virginia, who had been reading my column in Boston's *Beacon*, and wanted to talk about some other events. I'm still dealing with her request, but her call did remind me that we in Region 1 are geographically blessed. We are the most populous region, and have about the same number of local groups as each of the other regions. But we are concentrated into a smaller geographic area than any of the other regions. So, while you were assigned to your local group based solely on your ZIP code, your membership card doesn't say "Member of XZQ Local Group," it says "Member of American Mensa." You're invited and welcomed to participate in activities anywhere in American Mensa. I was thinking about this as I was driving to my sister's house, from my home in Greater New York, through Southern Connecticut, through Connecticut & Western Massachusetts, and into the environs of Boston Mensa, in less than five hours. I can drive to any group in the region within six hours, and I live at the extreme southern end of the region. So when I remind you to read other groups' newsletters, I really do mean there's nothing keeping you from taking all their calendars as your own. Your assigned local group may have just a few in-person events each month, but if you take all the groups together, you can find a Mensa event nearly every day of the week.

There is one bit of heaviness I feel the need to share, as we move into a new year: recently, some problems within a local group have bubbled up to seek my attention. Looking into the genesis of the problem, I learned that it all seems to stem from a lack of communication. One group of members changed something that had been done a certain way for a long time without announcing or explaining the change. Their reasoning was, to them, self-evident and for the best. Another group, learning of the change later, complained (loudly, and to members who were uninvolved in the issue) that the former group was ruining Mensa, and had to be stopped. It quickly devolved into name-calling and nastiness, which served only to scare away new members who didn't have any history with the group. I call on all members, and especially volunteers who are planning events or taking care of the business of Mensa, to remember that Mensa is a society of equals. Our name is based on the Latin word for table, in the hopes that we will come together and speak with each other as equals. So we should. Talk to each other. Disagreements fester. Feuds, mistrust, and animosity do nothing but make Mensa less enjoyable for everyone, even those not involved in the conflict. So please, open your mouth, talk. Pick up the phone, send an email, and if you can't bring yourself to talk with that one person, talk to

someone else, ask them to act as a go-between. If you can't find a go-between locally, talk to me. We are all equally members of Mensa, and we all want our membership to be valuable and worthwhile for ourselves, which does not mean making it less so for anyone else. Don't let disagreements devolve to sniping in the newsletter, or planning conflicting events, or accusing each other of malicious crimes. Just talk. Thanks for thinking about this, to help ward off the nastiness before it begins.

Finally, with the coming of the new year, we once again enter membership renewal season. The earlier you renew your membership, the better it is for Mensa (each of those renewal notices we don't have to send out saves money). Mensa has been a valuable part of my life for a very long time, so I renew each year. I urge you to do the same. (And as a member of the Finance Committee, who'll be meeting to plan the budget for the next year later in January, I would be remiss in responsibilities if I didn't seek this opportunity to save Mensa a few bucks and at the same time remind you to renew. Thanks!)

I've been told that, from time to time, I seem to repeat myself from one month to the next (not the entirety of my column, but some parts). That's true. While many groups in our Region publish a monthly newsletter, and run my column in each issue (for which I thank you), not every local group publishes their newsletter monthly, and not every group that does runs my column every month. So if you are reading it each month, thank you for your tolerance. And if you're not, well, that's why I point out that 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:

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>.

Mid-Hudson Mensa's Games Day: (May 4) at the Quality Inn & Suites in Fishkill, New York. For more info, contact Bill Hughes at [bill@blueskyballoons.com](mailto:bill@blueskyballoons.com).

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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)

SIGHT: the Service of Information, Guidance and Hospitality to Travelers

(<https://www.us.mensa.org/connect/sight/>)

YM: Young Mensan: teenaged members and those younger

YAM: Young Adult Mensan: members in their 20s and 30s