

Vermont Mensa Member Handbook

2011 Edition

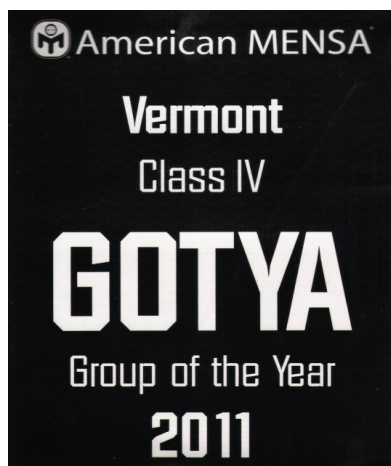
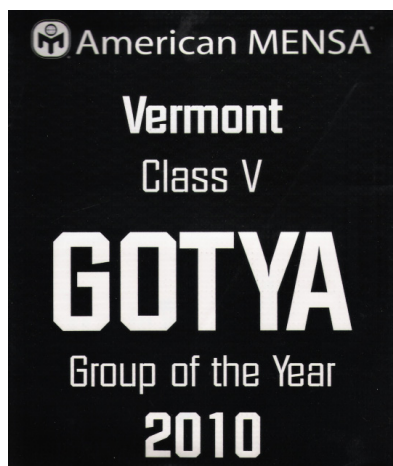


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Welcome to Vermont Mensa!

This handbook may seem a bit daunting, but we trust you will find it useful. While you know that Mensa is a “High IQ Society,” you may not know much else about what Mensa is and what Mensans do. This handbook may help to shed some light for you.

We have followed a proud Mensa tradition of not re-inventing the wheel, so you will find articles in this handbook that have been liberally borrowed from other groups. In addition to those groups listed with their respective articles, we give immense thanks to New Hampshire Mensa, which collected and commissioned these articles in the first place.

Vermont Mensa is a group in American Mensa’s Region 1, which covers all of New England and parts of New York and New Jersey. As a member of Mensa, you are welcome to attend not only Vermont Mensa events, but Mensa events anywhere in the world. Feel free to bring your spouse or a friend; they are welcome! Be prepared for friendly faces and lots of conversations. Don’t worry if you’re having a bad hair day; we won’t care! Mensans accept each other as they are, quirks and all -- that’s one of the strengths of our organization.

Mensa is a place where all are free and welcome to be themselves. We help people of like intelligence connect with one another, and are always glad to honor a new point of view. So show yourself. Remember: You’re one of us!

--- Online Resources ---

Vermont Mensa

| | |
|---|---|
| Website: | http://www.vermontmensa.org |
| Facebook Group: | Vermont Mensa |
| Yahoo Group: | vermontmensa |
| (Go to: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/vermontmensa to join.) | |

Region 1

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Website: | http://region1.us.mensa.org |
| Facebook Group: | Mensa Region 1 |

American Mensa

<http://www.us.mensa.org>

Mensa International

<http://www.mensa.org>



What Is Mensa?

Mensa is an international society whose ONLY qualification for membership is a score on a standardized intelligence test in the top 2% of the population. Mensa is the Latin word for “table.” It signifies a roundtable of equals.

WHAT IS A MENSAN?

(from Tim Goetsch, Minnesota Mensa)

Nobody’s Perfect. I hope somebody has already told you that Mensans are not as you would expect them to be. If not, let me tell you: Mensans are not as you would expect them to be. Most Mensans are not eggheads, but some are. Most Mensans have a normal social life, except for the ones who haven’t been out of their rooms in twenty years. Mensans are usually bright, except for the ones who are airheads, and are usually charming, except for the jerks.

Just what is a typical Mensan like? I don’t know. I have been with this group for 16 years and I still can’t figure it out. All I can say is, you should expect something bigger than life. Even the shy ones have bigger-than-life shyness. Mensa’s inexplicability is easily explained. A sociologist might refer to our group as a self-atomizing association. This means that individuality is encouraged and highly prized. Sayings like “Don’t rock the boat” and “Follow the leader” might as well be in a foreign language for all the good they do us. This makes Mensa fun to be in, but hard to describe.

Often a new member will spend their first event waiting for something intellectual to happen. Sure, the conversation has been intelligent so far, except for the parts that were goofy, but none of the really great questions of philosophy, science and religion were even hinted at. Don’t smart people think about such things? Sure they think about such things, but not all the time. You must remember that some of us have intellectual jobs and would rather give the brain a rest in the evening. Remember also that Mensa is a social organization. Great questions make for poor social speech. Yet sometimes, in spite of ourselves, an intellectual conversation breaks out. The equipment is there and sometimes it gets used. The secret is to be there when it happens. If you go to some of our meetings you can usually scare up a few people who enjoy intellectualism. Expect to put effort into finding these folks and once you have found them, don’t expect them to always be in the mood. You’ll have better luck if you watch the monthly calendar and go to meetings that interest you.

HOW MANY PEOPLE BELONG TO MENSA?

American Mensa is currently headquartered in Arlington, Texas. There are about 140 local chapters in most states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. There are now around 100 members of Vermont Mensa, and the national organization stands around 56,000.

WHAT DOES MENSA DO?

(adapted from *Minnesota Mensa Members' Handbook*)

There are three “official” purposes of Mensa: (1) to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity; (2) to encourage research into the nature, characteristics and uses of intelligence; (3) to provide a stimulating intellectual and social environment for its members. Unofficially, we DO a lot of things; some of these are highlighted in this section. Our local members have a wide range of interests, which vary from quilting to science fiction to computers to cooking to Irish music to Bible study to investments, as well as board and card games! We laugh, we discuss, we work together, we sit alone, we sit in groups. We drink, we abstain, we run, we vegetate. WE ARE HUMAN!

HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS WE DO:

SIGHT - The Service for International Guidance and Hospitality to Travelers. The SIGHT Coordinator can suggest accommodations for traveling M's, sometimes provide recommendations for local sightseeing, and information and introductions to the local group you are visiting. Some SIGHT hosts offer a spare room or a place to unroll a sleeping bag, and others give information on local hotels. If you are visiting, please respect the host guidelines and allow ample time for correspondence (at least two months, more for overseas). Be on time and reliable (call ahead if unavoidably delayed). Not all groups have local SIGHT Coordinators; contact American Mensa for a list. Mensans who travel frequently say this is one of the most useful services Mensa offers.

MENSA FOUNDATION - Formerly known as the Mensa Education and Research Foundation (and still referred to affectionately by many as MERF), the Mensa Foundation is a philanthropic, non-profit, tax-exempt organization, funded primarily by gifts from Mensans and others. The Mensa Foundation awards scholarships, grants research awards, publishes articles and sponsors colloquia.

COLLOQUIUM - A weekend-long meeting on a serious issue put on by American Mensa. Authorities are invited to speak and discussion follows. Themes for past Colloquia have included cosmology, genealogy, weather, humor, medicine, and politics.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND - Locally, regionally, and nationally Mensa offers scholarships to college students. Funds are raised when volunteers organize events such as a Mensa yard sale, auction, annual poker game, etc. The scholarships are given to winners of an essay competition.

GIFTED CHILDREN COORDINATOR (GCC) - The local Gifted Children Coordinator is someone who acts as a reference and points parents and educators (members and nonmembers alike) to resources that can help them to determine whether their child is gifted, and how to handle specific problems gifted children face.

NEWSLETTER - Every other month, volunteers write, compile, and publish our local newsletter, *VERisM*, which is put together by the Editor.

EXCOMM - The Executive Committee of our local group meets several times a year to keep our group active, informed, and in compliance with the national and local bylaws. All members are welcome to sit in on the ExComm meeting and give their 2¢, but only officers may vote.

TESTING - Trained proctors offer the Mensa Admissions Test to bring new members into our chapter. Proctors are needed in many geographic areas within our local chapter to provide adequate coverage for interested prospects.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) - SIGs provide a point of contact for members who have similar interests. They are started by anyone who is so motivated, and announced via the local and national newsletters. Membership is typically free, as many SIGs utilize free online resources; sometimes a minimal charge is required to offset costs when a paper SIG newsletter is offered. You may find more information about American Mensa's SIGs at www.us.mensa.org/sigs.

REGIONAL GATHERING (RG) - Many local groups, including our neighbors, host a regional gathering that is open to all Mensans and their families or guests. It is typically held at a hotel and runs from Friday to Sunday. Although most attendees stay both nights, some come just for Saturday. An RG offers speakers, game rooms, hospitality rooms (snacks and beverages are usually available 24 hours), and unlimited conversation! Some groups (depending on volunteers) offer a gifted children room/program, a movie room, live music, scholarship auction, dance, etc. The RG Chair (or co-chairs) and numerous volunteers put together this event. There are several RGs held around New England each year, as well as a few mini-RGs (smaller unstructured versions of their larger cousins). Look for notices of RGs, mini-RGs and AGs (see below) in the *Mensa Bulletin* and in our local newsletter. (Warning: RGs are rumored to be habit-forming!)

ANNUAL GATHERING (AG) - Similar to an RG, this American Mensa event draws attendees from all over the U.S. and many other countries. Upcoming Annual Gatherings are scheduled for Portland, OR (2011); Reno, NV (2012); Fort Worth, TX (2013); and right in our own backyard in Boston, MA (2014)!

WORLD GATHERING (WG) - Similar to an AG, this Mensa International event is held once every ten years. The most recent WG was held in August 2006 in Orlando, Florida, commemorating Mensa International's 60th Anniversary.

LOCAL EVENTS - For some, this is the backbone of Mensa membership. Our group has a number of events that are offered each month. Some are one-hit wonders, while others take place on a recurring basis. ALL are the brainchildren of volunteers who plan and host them. We hope you get involved by attending and hosting events.

GET DOWN AND PARTY!

(excerpted from Mensa in Georgia's *Journal of Arts and Opinions*)

Remember your college days when you would blow off an entire weekend by going to parties, hanging out with friends, going on impromptu road trips for the day, eating nothing but junk food and playing cards into the wee hours of the morning when you had a pile of homework to do? Those were the days! Now you're older, you have a good job, your life is stable and - let's face it - boring. When was the last time you had a weekend that was as wild and crazy as in college? Will you ever have that kind of fun again?

Now, imagine that you could, just for the weekend, get away and do some crazy things again... A Regional Gathering is a party weekend unmatched by any since your college days! We rent part of a hotel for the weekend and host a college-type party for our slightly older, more mature, tastes. You can even do it on a college student's budget.

After reading this, you think, "How can an RG be THAT much fun when I don't know anyone?" We are a friendly bunch. Mensa chapters around the country have been hosting these weekends for decades and use proven methods. Everyone will know your name (you'll be wearing a name tag), and you'll meet a lot of people quickly. You'll have opportunities to get to know everyone on a personal level, especially if you're wearing a green sticker on your name tag, which means "hug me anytime." (Yellow stickers mean "ask me first" and red stickers mean "no hugs.")

Our Neighboring Groups

To our east is **New Hampshire Mensa**. Their newsletter is *Momentum*; their website is www.nh.us.mensa.org.



To our west is **Mensa of Northeastern New York (MoNNY)**. Their newsletter is *MoNNY Matters*; their website is www.monny.us.mensa.org.

To our south is **Connecticut and Western Massachusetts Mensa (C&WM)**, which covers the western half of Massachusetts and most of Connecticut. Their newsletter is *Media*; their website is www.cwm.us.mensa.org.

Neighboring groups are generally pleased to welcome your application as a member of their respective Facebook groups. Just let them know you are a member of Vermont Mensa.



Wacky Acronyms and More...

AMC: American Mensa Committee - Mensa's officers, national and regional, elected and appointed, who meet several times a year and perform the administrative duties of Mensa.

AML: American Mensa, Ltd. - The national organization of Mensa.

BYO: Bring Your Own... - a frequent calendar entry, indicating the attendee is to provide whatever accoutrement is specified (beer, snacks, etc.).

Bulletin: The official publication of American Mensa, issued ten times a year.

Games Night: An event where members bring board, card or other games that they wish to play with other attendees. Usually a fun event where new games can be tried, old favorites revisited and with lots of conversation in between.

Hugging: A custom at RGs of which you are not obligated to partake. (Hint: Look for the different colored dots.)

IBD: International Mensa's Board of Directors, made up of officers and representatives from national groups.



Hong Kong Mensa

InterLink: Online newsletter for officers and other active members at the national and local levels. Available to all members by request to the National Office.

Isolated M: Monthly newsletter for the benefit of members who, for geographical, physical or psychological reasons, cannot participate in local group activities. Many Mensans subscribe to this highly popular publication.

Kitty: A minimal fee at certain functions, which offsets the cost of food for the hosts; this prevents the unfairness of a few people bearing the costs of Mensa functions and encourages all members to host functions.

Local Group: A chapter of American Mensa (e.g., Vermont Mensa) that covers a particular geographic area.

LocSec: Short for "Local Secretary," the presiding officer of a local group. The title is a holdover from Mensa's origins in Britain. Some local groups, including Vermont Mensa, have eschewed it in favor of the more recognizable "President."

M: Mensan - FM for female Mensan, MM for male Mensan.

MIL: Mensa International - The international organization of Mensa.

NO: The National Office of American Mensa, Ltd. in Arlington, Texas; sometimes referred to as “National.”

Proctor: A person who administers the Mensa Admissions Test.

RVC: Regional Vice Chair - Represents local groups in a specific geographic region. American Mensa is divided into ten regions; Vermont Mensa is in Region 1 (the Northeast).

VERisM: Vermont Mensa’s local newsletter.

YM: Young Mensans - usually under 18.



Italian Mensa



Getting the Hang of Mensa Tips for the Newly Active Member

Not only do most of us remember our first event or two, but we also remember some of our fears or misconceptions prior to joining. We’ve printed some of them below with the assumption that these may have crossed your mind. It’s hard to develop a sense of a group if you don’t have much information to work with. So, if your particular question isn’t answered below, please feel free to ask one of the members (e.g., the host of an event you want to attend or one of the officers listed in the newsletter). No one (repeat this loudly: NO ONE) will think your question is stupid.

SHOULD I PARTICIPATE OR NOT?

(adapted from *Beacon*, Boston Mensa)

If you’ve belonged to other organizations - forget about your experiences with them - they don’t apply to Mensa. There is no power structure here - each individual member has the power to make of Mensa whatever he or she desires. Joining is barely a beginning. Going to events, hosting your own events, and sharing your interests and expertise with others are the way to truly be a Mensan. This is not an honorary society that rewards people merely for having scored in the top 2% on a standard IQ test. The stated purpose of Mensa is to “provide intelligent individuals an opportunity to meet other smart people at the local, regional and national levels.” I believe this statement should be amended to read “an opportunity to meet other smart people who have inquiring minds.” A spirit of inquiry is the predominant characteristic of Mensans, an

almost childlike sense of wonder. We also seem to share a skewed view of the world, a tendency to walk around a problem or situation, to be able to view it from all angles, instead of looking at it in the ‘normal’ way. For many of us, a Mensa gathering was the first place anyone understood our jokes and even laughed at them. Our humor is the bond that holds us together. Mensa is the most accepting, welcoming group of people I have ever encountered. There are no initiation rites to endure and no cliques to break into.

ARE MENSANS EGGHEADS?

(adapted from *Owl Creatures Great and Small: A Guide to San Diego Mensa*)

Mensans are so mixed a group that they defy simple description. Ms come in all ages, shapes, and sizes, comprise all social, political, and racial groups, and have all sorts of different careers. Few, if any, conform to the traditional archetype of the pipe-smoking intellectual. Looking at a gathering of Ms, the first thought that might come into your head is, “What do any of these people have in common?” One look at the sheer amount of conversation going on and at the rapt/interested/irate expressions on the faces provides the answer. Find any topic that you like, express any view about it that you want, and you will probably find someone to agree, another to contest your view, and a bunch of kibitzers willing to stand around and give free advice. Wide-ranging discussions are the most common hallmark of a Mensa gathering.

DO I NEED TO SHOW MY MEMBERSHIP CARD?

No. Just show up.

MAY I BRING A GUEST?

Yes! Spouses (and other members of your household) and invited guests are always welcome. The rule of thumb is one guest per member; both of you will be more comfortable. Please don’t send a guest to an event without you, however; a stranger among members would be very uncomfortable alone. RSVP when necessary, for your guest as well as yourself. And unless an event is listed as adult only or for a mature audience, then assume children are welcome.

WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

(from *M-formation*, handbook of Northern New Jersey Mensa)

Lucky you, you have just joined an exclusive social network, and you don’t have to run out to buy a whole wardrobe. At monthly meetings, open houses, games nights, SIG meetings, wear whatever you are most comfortable wearing. Mensa functions are casual and informal. Lots of us are most comfortable in jeans; others may stop in on the way home from the office or fancy restaurant, so you’ll see more businesslike or formal wear. Anything in between is also appropriate. Be yourself. When attending a Mensa function at a restaurant or other public place, check with the host(ess) or coordinator to find out whether more formal attire may be necessary. Management may require that “proper casual attire” be worn.

WHAT DO MENSANS TALK ABOUT?

(from *Intelligencer*, Metro Washington Mensa)

We gossip, discuss world affairs, make horrendous puns, tell jokes, ask for advice, and give unsolicited advice. Some of us hold forth (and fifth, and sixth...) on our favorite topics, calmly ignoring all signs of terminal boredom in our listeners. Some of us are fascinating and lively people who dominate a conversation by sheer force of personality, to the delight of our audience. If someone asks an immediate question like “I wonder what is holding this table together?” it can lead to a discussion of tables, methods of construction, varieties of hardwoods, the depletion of North America’s forests, the economic feasibility of importing wood from Asia, and ecological implications of building things from wood versus plastic. Then again, they may just take the table apart to find out. It is this ‘curious kid’ quality I find, to my joy, again and again in Mensans, who seem to love questions like these, to which most non-M’s respond with a “huh?” and a sideways look. It’s great to be able to share these wonderings and have them considered as reasonable things to apply one’s mind to, however briefly.

FYI: People usually hop around in conversations, so don’t feel abandoned if the person you’ve been talking to turns away after a while to talk to someone else. Do the same.

CAN I GO TO MENSA EVENTS GIVEN BY OTHER LOCAL GROUPS?

(adapted from *M-formation*, Northern New Jersey Mensa)

Sure you can! An M is an M is an M. Our members are welcome at other local group events and their members are welcome at ours. Cross-fertilization of ideas and people (whoops, be careful there) is good for all groups. You are considered a member of only one local group, and you may choose a group other than that of your local ZIP Code if you wish. In addition, for a nominal fee you can subscribe to the newsletters of any other group, which will give you information about their events. As a member of Mensa, you may attend Mensa events anywhere in the country - or world!

WHAT ABOUT MEETING MENSANS WHEN I TRAVEL?

Mensans traveling to other parts of the country who would like to have an instant social life when they get there are welcome to check out the appropriate local group’s website. Visit www.us.mensa.org and click on Groups, then Local Groups to find their site. To read another local group’s newsletter, go to www.us.mensa.org/newsletters.

Alternatively, if you want assistance with local information or accommodations, you may contact the SIGHT Coordinator for your destination, whether domestic or abroad. Visit www.us.mensa.org/sight to get started.



Attending Events

by Laurie Levesque, New Hampshire Mensa

Mensans meet and keep in touch with each other through local group newsletters, Special Interest Groups, email and electronic distribution lists, and by hosting or attending events. Below are a handful of myths about attending events. If you wondered about the truth of any of them, you should reconsider.

Myth 1: As a new or newly-active member, I'm going to have to prove myself.

Reality: Newcomers are welcomed with warmth and interest. New members aren't asked to prove themselves, jump through intellectual hoops, or do anything they don't want to do. The assumption is, if you've come to an event, you're there as an equal with everyone else. In my experience, Mensans don't actually discuss issues of IQ very often at all, or if they do, it is usually in reference to the education system in this country or as a self-deprecating comment about needing to be re-tested. If you haven't heard this joke before, don't worry; Mensans don't ever get re-tested, but we like to make good-natured comments about it now and then (usually about ourselves). The diversity of this group is one of its strengths and one of its challenges. All of us are accepted for who we are. After meeting a number of members over time, it is hard not to notice that diversity permeates everything in this group, ranging from viewpoints, preferences, interests, careers, interpersonal skills, work ethics, political tendencies, religious views, and everything else on which we could differ. The bottom line is, once you are a member, you are accepted.

Myth 2: If it's a regular monthly or weekly event, I'd feel obligated to keep attending.

Reality: Mais non! If you see an event that interests you go, have fun, enjoy. Stay until the end or leave early. If the event is offered again, decide then if you want to go. Any sense of obligation to keep attending is likely to be a creation of your own mind. One of the things that longtime Mensans have learned is that people come and go: we move, we travel, individuals may lose interest in an event they've attended regularly, new events catch their eye, personal schedules get hectic for a time, or other life issues may take priority.

Myth 3: No one will talk to me if I am a new or inactive member.

Reality: This couldn't be further from the truth really. First of all, you can't assume that everyone at an event already knows each other. Many may, but not always. The attendees at any given event vary, and there are times when it isn't clear who knows whom. Nearly 500 members belong to this chapter, and there are folks in Massachusetts and Vermont who cross the borders to

come to our events. Unless you tell the other folks you are new, they might never know; their assumption might be that you are just another member they had never met before. And, if you haven't attended many or any events, take the initiative and introduce yourself to a few other attendees. If you are shy, then contact the host in advance and ask her or him to keep an eye out for you and introduce you to a couple of the other attendees. It's a service most of us provide more than willingly because we remember what it's like to feel new. When the host or another attendee introduces a newcomer, that first timer is typically welcomed like a new friend. Members go out of their way to talk to new people, to include them in conversations, to show them around and to get to know them.

Myth 4: If I don't really click with the people I meet at my first event, then maybe Mensa isn't for me.

Reality: False. Please reread Myths 1 and 3 and then come back. Okay, now let's rethink this. There are a number of events and regional gatherings offered by this group and by the other local groups. Each event attracts different people for as many reasons (geography, preference, timing, energy level, etc.). And sometimes the same event held a second or third time has a whole different crowd that shows up. You know the saying that you can't step twice into the same river? There's so much diversity in this group that you can't assume that the first 3, 7, or 10 people you meet are representative of everyone. One of the great joys of belonging to this group is that it is possible to develop several sets of acquaintances/friends who may have little in common with each other beyond membership in Mensa. The key is not to stop with the first few you meet, but rather to seek them out, or let them find you. But, it can only happen if there are opportunities to interact.

Myth 5: I shouldn't bother the hostess or host prior to the event.

Reality: Incorrect. Hosts provide contact information to you in their calendar listing for a reason. If the event is a new one or it is one you have never attended and you find that you have questions or concerns, the best thing to do is contact the host. Hosts field calls and emails when their driving directions to an event are unclear, if it's unclear whether food is provided or if attendees should bring food/beverages for themselves or to share, if it is unclear whether the event is for adults only, if handicap access is needed by an attendee, or if an attendee is concerned about problematic or life-threatening allergies (e.g., nuts, cats, cigarettes). If you have similar concerns, or any concerns, contact the host before the event or ask when you arrive there. Of course, it never hurts to remember that the person hosting an event doesn't work for Mensa. Each is a member, just as you are, and each volunteered to put an event together so please be considerate. If you phone, do so during what most people would consider reasonable hours: after 8:00 a.m. and before 8:00 p.m. (but check the event listing for specific instructions). Unless you are trying to call immediately before the event, give them a chance to get back to you. They may be able to return your call within scant hours of receiving it, but not always.



Hosting Events

Mensa does not host events. Puzzling? The truth is, only Mensans host events. It may sound like semantics to you, but in reality it affects what goes on in our group. Okay, so we grant you that our local group sponsors its ExComm Meetings. However, every other event listed in our newsletter and on our website exists solely because one or more of our members wants it to happen. Some members just attend events, others host and attend, and some attend nothing, but they stay in touch through newsletters, websites, and email. If you haven't tried hosting, or if you aren't happy with the selection of events offered to you, or if you are new to the group, then you'll find some helpful tips below and maybe the motivation to create your own event.

An event can also be co-hosted by two or more members. Possibilities range from sharing equally in the planning and hosting of the event all the way to one person providing the location and another doing all the planning for it. This works out well for members who have small homes or apartments but have lots of enthusiasm for hosting events (and for those with lots of space, and a willingness but no time to set up an event). The division of effort is entirely up to you.

The best way to learn what events you like to host is to just jump in and try a few out. If you have questions about hosting events, just ask other members. And remember, this is just a rough guide to hosting events. You are likely to have many good ideas or suggestions beyond those here. We encourage you to try them out and see if other Ms are interested in them too.

HOW DOES AN EVENT HAPPEN?

Glad you asked! Basically, you decide that you want to do something, host something, or attend something and then you call it an event and list it in the newsletter. The something part is up to you.



Owl

(from *Little M*, Metropolitan Washington Mensa)

Because the owl was sacred to Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom, it has become the unofficial mascot of Mensa, and when you get active in Mensa you'll see lots of them. Over the years other unofficial mascots have included pelicans, unicorns, Opus the penguin, and doubtless other things - but the owl is pretty solidly entrenched.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EVENT?

The short answer is, what do you want it to be? Members have hosted everything from symphony trips to water balloon fights, monthly games events, movie nights, and pool parties. Our calendar typically already has dinners, lunches, and brunches, but don't let that stop you from hosting something similar, especially if those listed aren't convenient to you. (e.g., if you want a dinner event in Rutland, try out a few restaurants, find one that has an easy time accommodating a group on the day and time you prefer, and then keep listing that event; it may take two or three times for it to take hold.) Events can be as creative as you want them to be. Try different things! They can be indoors or outside, sports-related, fun, serious, adult-only, or family-friendly...whatever you want. But that's the key - host an event that is fun for you.

HOW DO I KNOW PEOPLE WILL SHOW UP?

You don't. The attendance at each event is governed by a number of things: interest, cost, location, weather, traffic, time, season, and a zillion individual preferences. Should you let this stop you? Heck no, just do it. Plan an event that you want to attend. That way, if no one shows up, you haven't lost anything. But that's rare. What is more likely to happen, however, is that you'll get anywhere from a handful to a dozen members who show with bells on (not literally, but you never know). Some events require RSVPs if held in a location where an exact count is needed. Events held in public venues or in peoples' homes sometimes don't require guests to provide advance notice, but if you feel it is necessary, note it in your calendar listing. Speaking of the calendar listing, this is the way we typically advertise events in our chapter (see below).

WHEN SHOULD I HOLD MY EVENT?

Well, whenever it is convenient for you, of course, with one exception: no events are listed at the same time as official group functions (such as any ExComm Meetings, or if we were to hold a Region Gathering in the future). Other than that, do what works for you. Some events are held for an hour or two, whereas others last all day or even an entire weekend. If you have time constraints for your event, note that in the calendar listing. Events can be scheduled any day of the week, daytime or evening. You can certainly host one-time events, host the same event a couple of times, or if it's something you really love, you can make it a regular monthly/weekly/annual event. Some members are partial to one type of event, others come up with several different ones that they think are fun and want to share with other Ms.

HOW DO I ADVERTISE MY EVENT?

First, decide which day/time your event will happen. If it is not going to take place at your home, be sure to get the name, address, and phone number of the venue. Write up a brief description of the event (with all those details) and write accurate directions on how to get to it. [Hint: Test drive the directions, or have someone else do it to ensure that someone from out of town will

recognize the signs and landmarks as you describe them.] List your contact information so members with questions can call or email you, and remember, not all members have email! Send all of this information to our Editor, who will ensure it gets published in *VERisM* (our newsletter) and on our website. (See the most current issue of *VERisM* for contact and deadline information.) You may publicize it through our Yahoo Group and Facebook Group, as well. If you need assistance, or if you've never listed an event, contact one of our Area Coordinators or our Editor for feedback and suggestions.

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS HOST?

Well, first, pat yourself on the back for creating an event. Really! But don't hurt yourself, because at minimum you'll need to be at the event to make sure it happens as advertised (understandable exceptions would be a blizzard, catastrophic damage to your home, or being beamed aboard an alien vessel). Seriously though, as host you should do the following:

- Provide accurate information about the event, time, location, and anything else people would need to know (i.e., tell us if we need to bring our own lawn chairs, or if smoking is permitted outdoors only, or warn allergic members if there will be cats in the house).
- State the game plan up front. If you are providing food and drinks for all, then say so. If you are providing just the space but you want everyone to bring food to share or to bring their own beverages - that's okay, too. Some events may require a small contribution at the door to help cover the expenses (this is usually \$2-\$5, but always fair for what is being offered); put that in the calendar listing, too.
- Make everyone feel welcomed, and meet and greet new members in particular - this may be their first event.
- If you are hosting the event in a public place, assume that some attendees won't recognize you. Tell them how they will be able to find you and the rest of the group. If at a restaurant, you can prop a stuffed animal or copy of the newsletter up on the table. If at a museum or park, designate a specific meeting spot. In some groups, it's common to use yellow (a traditional Mensa color) balloons or a yellow banner to help attendees find each other.

WHAT DO I DO IF ARCHIE BUNKER RSVPs?

This question and response come from Northern NJ Mensa: Into everyone's life inevitably at one time or another prances or pratfalls someone whom you just can't stand. What do you do if Archie Bunker RSVPs? National policy states that you can refuse admission to those whom you do not wish to have in your home and that you can eject anyone whose behavior becomes obnoxious or offensive.



Variety is the Spice of Mensa Events

by Laurie Levesque, New Hampshire Mensa

If you had to use a spice to describe a Mensa event, which would you use? Intriguing question, really. Your answer would depend on your taste preferences, cooking experiences, and the ideas you've collected from others. Well, this section hopes to spur your creative juices to cook up new events, reinstate classic events, or just plain help us stock the pantry (a.k.a. the Mensa calendar) with lots of choices throughout our region. Included are some ideas from people who reflected on their favorite events from yesteryear (or yesterdecade as the case may be). Pull up a chair, grab a plate, and enjoy.

Variety in length: You can hold your event for one hour, one evening, one day, one weekend.

Variety in time/day: Not every event needs to be Friday or Saturday night. Schedule yours for after-work, a weekend day, any evening, late night (perfect for watching shooting stars or watching *The Rocky Horror Picture Show!*), weekdays, holidays, Monday night parties, or as an end-of-the-week-let-your-hair-down event.

Variety in frequency: Some events are one-shot deals, others are held on a regular basis until the host chooses to discontinue it (or someone else takes it over). Other events happen infrequently or sporadically throughout the year. Choose a schedule that is comfortable for you.

Variety in location: Many events you will see in our calendar are hosted in restaurants and at members' homes. This is mainly because it is easy for the person hosting the event (particularly if it is a regular event and the driving directions and meeting location don't change). For events away from home (e.g., a night at the movies or a sports event), be sure to specify a spot to meet, such as a section at the stadium or a bar/restaurant beforehand.

Variety in type: Though many events involve food or are held at restaurants, there are many other alternatives. On the next page are some spicy event ideas, from A to Z. Your ideas are bound to extend far beyond this list. Try them out !

Art shows, Mensa talent shows, pet shows

Book discussion groups, poetry readings

Costume parties (wear a costume of your favorite pun, book, movie, or person)

Darts, bowling, golfing, billiards, etc.

Election parties, political debates, discussions of current events

Fact finding trips, treasure hunts, map quests, road rallies
Game events (board games, card games, or something different altogether)
Holiday parties (Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, New Year's Eve, Arbor Day)
Inter-group events (with New Hampshire, MoNNA, or Mensa Canada, e.g.)
Joint yard sale, book swap, or clothing drive
Knowledge nights, guest speakers, public talks
Lake parties, hot tub parties, pool parties
Movie nights (at your home with DVD or VHS or meet at a theater)
New member welcome event, meet the officers
Outdoor events (BBQs, backyard parties)
Plays, concerts, theater, musicals, dinner-theater, or other community events
Quiz shows, trivia games, contests
Regional Gatherings
Sporting events (attending or holding your own), waterwars, paintball
Theme events (get creative here!), alter ego parties
U bring your own _____ party
Volunteer activities (walk-a-thons, 5K races, nursing homes, soup kitchens)
Walking tours, sightseeing, visiting historical markers or buildings
Xylography, quilting bees, paint your own pottery, craft lessons
Young Mensan events
ZIP code party (members in same geographic area can get to know one another)

Like most people, I joined Mensa to get to know more people. Although I have never been very active in Mensa and have not attended as many functions as some, I have made some great friends. Through these Mensa friends of mine, I have also met and gotten to know other people outside of Mensa.

One of the great things about Mensa is that nobody talks about how smart they are; they just talk! In some groups, people want to know you for where you can get them or what you can do for them. In Mensa, people just want to get to know you.

*Jane Hoffman
New Hampshire Mensa*



What Do Our Officers Do?

Below is a list of local officers, both elected and appointed, and their usual duties. Keep in mind that these positions are voluntary and shaped somewhat by the skills and interests of the volunteer. This is especially true in the case of appointed officers. Some positions are by nature more inflexible than others; the basic minimum duties of the most critical positions are spelled out in the bylaws. Here we provide a little more familiarity with the customary scope of these positions.

ELECTED POSITIONS

Vermont Mensa has five elected voting positions: President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Editor, and Membership Officer. The elected officers serve as the governing body of our local group, setting policy and overseeing the spending of our allotment from American Mensa (your dues), our newsletter, our scholarship fund, and the myriad other activities and functions that take place within our group.

President: The President presides at ExComm Meetings, administers business affairs, and is the liaison between the local group and the National Office. This officer also provides leadership, usually in the form of “do it first until another victim, OOPS, volunteer, can be found.” Usually the President ends up doing the work of unfilled appointed positions as well. A handbook is available from the National Office.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is responsible for the local group’s funds and keeps the financial books. Semiannual detailed financial reports are required for publication. Traditionally a bi-monthly summary report is also produced. A handbook is available from the National Office.

Recording Secretary: The Recording Secretary is responsible for taking the minutes of ExComm Meetings. Minutes for each meeting are required for publication in the newsletter. Keeping the minutes is quite interesting when three people are all talking at once!

Editor: This is the Editor of our local newsletter, *VERisM*. The Editor has total responsibility for the newsletter from conception through printing and mailing. A firm concept of deadlines is imperative to the smooth operation of the newsletter. A handbook is available from the National Office.

Membership Officer: The Membership Officer mails this handbook and other material to new members, encourages member participation in local activities, and contacts lapsed members to encourage them to rejoin. A handbook is available from the National Office.

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Vermont Mensa has five appointed voting positions: Gifted Children Coordinator, Public Relations Coordinator, Testing Coordinator, Scholarship Chair, and Member-at-Large. These positions are appointed by the President with the concurrence of the other elected officers.

Gifted Children Coordinator: The holder of this position has access to or knowledge of resources to make available to gifted children and their parents. This essentially means pointing people in the right direction. A handbook is available from the National Office. The Gifted Children Coordinator also assists in coordinating activities for our chapter's Young Mensans.

Public Relations Coordinator: This officer makes up press releases, keeps up-to-date lists of newspaper and media contacts, and helps with special membership campaigns. The Public Relations Coordinator also fields requests for information about us. A handbook is available from the National Office.

Testing Coordinator: This person handles any applicable pretest paperwork for the proctors and arranges testing schedules. The Testing Coordinator also maintains a current list of prospective members, and keeps them abreast of upcoming testing information. Quite often, this is the first member with whom prospective members have contact.

Scholarship Chair: This person handles the annual scholarship essay contest, mails out applications, and coordinates announcement of the scholarship contest with the Public Relations Coordinator. This person also recruits judges and arranges judging session(s), and forwards the winning entries on for regional judging. Guidelines and assistance for the Scholarship Chair are provided by the Mensa Foundation.

Member-at-Large: The Member-at-Large is an advisory position on the ExComm. It is customary for the Member-at-Large to hold another (non-voting) appointed position and to be available for special projects or to serve on committees.

OTHER APPOINTED POSITIONS

These non-voting positions are also appointed by the President with the concurrence of the other elected officers.

Area Coordinators: Area Coordinators serve as contacts for members in particular geographic regions (such as the Brattleboro and Burlington areas, and the Upper Valley). They are responsible for planning and publicizing events in their respective areas, and for assisting new hosts in their areas with event planning.

Proctors: Proctors are the backbone of new growth. To be certified, proctors must meet strict criteria dictated by the developers of the tests we use and

enforced by the National Office. The current minimum is a bachelor's degree and experience in timed testing, which can be acquired by working under a current proctor. Proctors arrange for their own testing locations and are often in contact with prospects before a test. Proctors and testing locations are always needed, especially in outlying areas. Please contact the Testing Coordinator or the President if you think you might qualify or know of a possible location. A handbook is available from the National Office.

SIGHT Coordinator: This person is the local coordinator of the Service for Information, Guidance, and Hospitality to Travelers network within Mensa. The position can be as simple as giving visiting Ms ideas for sightseeing, restaurant and lodging suggestions; or as involved as setting up host situations or personal tours for out-of-town Mensans. This position is appointed by the national SIGHT Coordinator based on local group recommendation.

Webmaster: Designs, develops, and maintains the Chapter's web presence. This includes creating content as appropriate, verifying and integrating relevant and suitable submitted materials, responding to web-related inquiries, and providing a status report to the Executive Committee on an occasional basis.

OTHER POSITIONS WE'D LOVE TO FILL (Hint, hint. Can you help?)

Activities Coordinator: The Activities Coordinator helps to coordinate events in areas not covered by one of the Area Coordinators.

Calendar Editor: The Calendar Editor gathers/receives information about events that members are hosting, assembles it and submits it to the Editor for publication in *VERisM*.

Ombudsman: The Ombudsman mediates disputes within the group that cannot be resolved otherwise. The Ombudsman is a rarely-called-upon, but necessary, position.

Regional Gathering (RG) Chair: The RG Chair would serve as the chief coordinator for an RG (or mini-RG) hosted by Vermont Mensa. This person recruits and orchestrates several other volunteers who handle different aspects of the RG: registration, hospitality, programming, etc. RG Chairs typically learn how to run RGs by volunteering in different positions at other RGs to gain experience.

WHAT GOES ON AT AN EXCOMM MEETING?

(adapted from the writings of James Draper, Treelady, Carl Howes and Paul Mailman)

Any member in good standing may attend an ExComm Meeting. Announcements of ExComm Meetings are made via the newsletter and website. The meeting is where the business of your Mensa chapter is conducted.

The President calls the meeting to order (if a quorum of officers is present) and goes through the agenda items. The officers, both elected and appointed, report on their activities. Everyone has a chance to speak up and to give his or her opinion.

If ExComm approval is required for an item, a motion is made by an officer and seconded by another. If the subject is without controversy, the whole process might take a minute or less. When there is some difference of opinion or ideas and everyone wants to talk, it can take much longer. After the business is attended to, the group may hang around and socialize for a bit.

You're invited. While all of the above may sound a little boring, we should probably also mention that a meeting does not go by without a good share of Mensan-style banter and cajolery from the participants. We enjoy each other's company and the camaraderie that ensues. It makes up for the time and effort that must be devoted to the positions we hold. We are serious about the commitment to Mensa, but we also have fun while we're at it, which is one of the best reasons we can think of for running for office or accepting an appointed position. Try coming to a meeting sometime. You'll only be a stranger once, if at all.



Communication or “Whom To Call For What”

How do I get in contact with other Mensans in the group?

Attend events listed in the newsletter or online. Submit something to the newsletter. (The Editor accepts letters, requests, poems, short stories, nonfiction, serials, ads, artwork, humor, and monthly columns.) Sign up for the Yahoo and Facebook groups.

How do I get in touch with an officer of the local group?

Attend the ExComm Meetings, which is open to all members. (While there, be sure to give your two cents on whatever is being discussed.) Send email or make a phone call to your local officers, who are listed in the newsletter.

I am planning to host an event; how do I get it listed in the calendar?

Contact the respective Area Coordinator, who can assist in getting the information disseminated to the Editor, the Webmaster, and to the Yahoo and Facebook groups. If you are outside of an area served by an Area Coordinator, contact the Editor directly.

How do I change my mailing address?

You can either send mail to the national office (American Mensa, Ltd., 1229 Corporate Drive West, Arlington, TX 76006-6103) or do it on the website of American Mensa. Vermont Mensa will be informed of this change and will then begin using your new address.

What if I live too far from other members to make it feasible to attend or host any events?

Continue to get the newsletter and participate from afar (be a SIGHT coordinator for your region, write a regular column in the newsletter, start a SIG, or talk to the Membership Officer for other ideas). If you really feel isolated, you could also subscribe to *Isolated M* which is enjoyed by people who live in remote areas as well as many other Ms. Email *Isolated M*'s Editor Susan Ramsdell at isolatedm1974@yahoo.com.

What Mensa means to me is confirmation. I grew up with a total lack of self-confidence and truly thought I was stupid, despite being placed in the accelerated learning classes in high school. As an adult, I slowly began to acquire self-confidence, but it was a painful process with many setbacks. I had learned of Mensa, but never considered applying. Then I learned that my older brother, the systems analyst, thought I was more intelligent than he was. Being invited to join Mensa was a tremendous boost to my self-esteem. In Mensa, I found loving friends and a forum that has allowed me to expand in many ways. Mensa confirmed what I had come to suspect... that I really was OK!

Gayle Cook
North Texas Mensa



Just Lurking

by Laurie Levesque, Sympathetic Non-Lurker

Our group, like all Mensa groups, has a large percentage of members who do not attend events. These individuals receive their local and national newsletters, may or may not belong to SIGs, but for their own reason(s) choose not to interact much or at all with the other local Mensans. This might be news to Mensans who do attend events, who see a different crowd in attendance at any given event in any given month. We have some members who have attended events infrequently, but you wouldn't know it unless you somehow had the ability and time to attend every event offered by this group as well neighboring groups.

Other members have been to no events; some of them are newly joined or reinstated members, others have been in our group a long time (e.g., 5, 10, 25+ years). To those of you who are planning to be active, please recognize that nonattendance is just as valid a membership experience - if this is truly what the member prefers (and many do). Reasons for not participating can range from a lack of interest in the events, having no events sponsored nearby, having a tight budget which eliminates attending any events at restaurants, being extremely shy and uncomfortable around other people, fear of attending that first event or meeting (which is hugely common in Mensa as a whole), concern about what the other attendees are going to be like, or a lack of confidence in being as bright as the other members (also a common fear, usually overcome by meeting other Ms).

Mensa, like other social organizations, has some members who simply want to belong to the group without participating in events. This is perfectly fine when it is by choice. However, if noninvolvement is a problem due to inhibition or a lack of knowledge about the events, people, or how one will be treated - it can easily be remedied by contacting the event host, or an ExComm member to ask questions, express your concerns, or inquire how to get involved. If the problem is that events are too far away, take the big plunge and host an event or contact someone (again, an ExComm member may be able to help you find someone), and offer to help him or her host an event.

Lastly, for those who choose not to attend events, we encourage another route for your participation by contributing to the newsletter. The local newsletter is not just to provide the events calendar and minutes from the ExComm Meetings. We try to provide items that may interest our membership so your contributions are welcomed and encouraged. Have you taken a trip somewhere, gone to a conference, read or studied something interesting, or have a rant about current events to get off your chest? Write it up and send it in. Maybe you'd prefer to have a regular column (regular as in, happens on a predictable basis, not necessarily mainstream); propose it to the Editor.

In closing, it is important to reiterate that Mensa memberships are used in many ways, all of which are valid. Some members do feel that you will get the most out of membership by meeting a handful of Mensans every now and then, to remind yourself that someone DOES get your jokes, that your train of thought CAN be followed without explanation, or that your frustrations about feeling different as a kid (or adult) ARE common. For the most part, Mensans accept each other unconditionally, and this means whether you participate actively or not.

Thank You!

Thank you to all of the contributors named throughout this handbook, and to all of the Mensa Editors from across the country who let us liberally borrow materials.

Bylaws of Vermont Mensa

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

1. The name of this organization shall be Vermont Mensa.
2. Vermont Mensa is a Local Group of American Mensa, Ltd., and is subject to the Constitution of Mensa, the Bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd., and the resolutions adopted by the American Mensa Committee. American Mensa, Ltd. is herein abbreviated as “AML” and the American Mensa Committee as “AMC”.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership of Vermont Mensa shall be open to all members of AML in good standing in the geographic areas assigned to Vermont Mensa by the AMC, or as otherwise assigned by AML.
2. Mensa members in good standing who are not also members of Vermont Mensa are welcome to participate in the social activities of the local group at the discretion of the host or hostess. The National Ombudsman, his surrogate, and members of the AMC shall be permitted to participate in the business affairs of the local group in the discharge of their official duties.
3. Vermont Mensa shall observe the preferences of members for data suppression and publication, as filed with AML, when publishing a local group roster or membership directory/register.

ARTICLE III. OFFICERS & DUTIES

1. The governing body of Vermont Mensa shall be an Executive Committee (ExComm), which conducts the business of the local group. The ExComm consists of five elected voting members (President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Editor, and Membership Officer) and five appointed voting members (Gifted Children Coordinator, Public Relations Coordinator, Proctor/Testing Coordinator, Scholarship Chair, and Member-at-Large). The conflict of interest rules stated in the Bylaws of American Mensa for the AMC shall also be applicable to Vermont Mensa and the members of its Executive Committee.
2. The President shall be the chief executive officer of Vermont Mensa and the liaison with other local groups. He or she shall be the chief point of contact between AML and the local group. The President shall endeavor to pass information to and from the local group in a timely fashion, and shall notify AML and the Regional Vice Chairman (RVC) for the local group of the results of any changes in the officers of the group during the term within two weeks of the change.
3. The Treasurer shall be responsible for financial matters of Vermont Mensa, including the finances of the newsletter, and shall submit to the ExComm a semi-annual financial report that

shall also be published in the newsletter. The financial report shall contain schedules of income, expenses, and balances for all funds under the control of the local group, including Regional Gathering, scholarship, and other special funds. (Vermont Mensa shall comply with federal financial reporting requirements.) The Treasurer shall also maintain a listing of all equipment owned by the local group. The Treasurer shall, if necessary, assist the Editor in the preparation and submission of any postal forms that might be required. At least quarterly, the Treasurer shall submit to the President or his or her designee, statements from banks and any other institutions where the group's money is deposited, or shall cause a statement to be sent directly to the President or his or her designee (who must also be a voting member of the ExComm). All accounts must be separate accounts in the name of the local group, and shall have more than one signatory so that funds can be accessed in the temporary absence of the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall assist the President, preside over meetings in the absence of the President, and immediately and automatically succeed to the office of President if that office becomes vacant.

4. The Recording Secretary shall be responsible for taking and maintaining the minutes of ExComm Meetings. ExComm Meeting minutes shall also be published in the newsletter.

5. The ExComm shall publish a newsletter at least quarterly. If an electronic version of the newsletter is also created, the printed version shall nevertheless be the version to be sent to members unless they request otherwise. The Editor shall edit the newsletter. The Editor shall publish notices of meetings and programs, required ballots, results of business meetings and elections, amendments to the bylaws and related discussions and ballots, and the semi-annual financial reports; and shall prepare and publish Post Office forms if required. The outgoing Editor must turn over all files in good order to the incoming Editor no later than 15 days after the outgoing Editor leaves office.

6. The Membership Officer shall assist the President in administering business concerning membership affairs, particularly recruitment and new members, and shall deal generally with membership questions.

7. The Gifted Children Coordinator shall assist in coordinating Young Mensan activities, and shall make American Mensa's giftedness resources available to children and their parents.

8. The Public Relations Coordinator shall keep updated lists of media contacts, create press releases and other publicity materials as appropriate, help with special membership campaigns, and field requests for information about Vermont Mensa.

9. The Proctor/Testing Coordinator shall handle the administrative details of Vermont Mensa's testing program, and shall act as the liaison between testing prospects and proctors. If this officer is also a Proctor, he/she shall be referred to as the Proctor Coordinator; if not, he/she shall be referred to as the Testing Coordinator.

10. The Scholarship Chair shall administer the annual Mensa Foundation scholarship program for Vermont Mensa by disseminating applications, recruiting judges, arranging judging sessions, and forwarding the winning entries on for regional judging.

11. The Member-at-Large shall perform such duties as are assigned by the ExComm.

12. Non-voting appointed positions of Vermont Mensa may also include Area Coordinators for outlying groups of members, and coordinators for other activities as deemed necessary for the effective function of Vermont Mensa as designated by the ExComm. The duties of the appointed officers of Vermont Mensa shall be those implied by their respective titles and may include other duties as assigned by the ExComm. Appointed officers, positions and committees are appointed by the President with the approval of the ExComm. With the exception of the ExComm, all committees shall select their own Chairmen from among the members of each committee.

13. The ExComm shall appoint an Ombudsman, who shall serve as mediator for disputes within the local group, shall be an arbitrator available to serve as a representative to a Regional Hearings Committee, and shall perform such other duties as may be required of all local group ombudsmen by American Mensa. The Ombudsman, and the National Ombudsman, may submit material to the Editor marked "for publication" that relates to his or her official duties; anything so marked shall be given the highest practicable priority for publication in the newsletter.

14. All officers, whether elected or appointed, must be current members in good standing of AML; an officer is defined as any person who is given a title with specific responsibilities. All voting members of the ExComm must also be current members in good standing of Vermont Mensa.

15. The terms of office of elected officers shall be two years from April 1st (until March 31st) of an even-numbered year subsequent to elections in January of the same year, or until installation of a properly qualified successor, except in the case of resignation, succession to higher office, or removal from office as provided in Article III, sections 11, 12 or 13.

16. The term of office for all appointed officers and positions expires at the end of the term of office of the current elected officers. Appointed officers, positions, and committees may be removed from office by majority vote of the ExComm unless otherwise stated herein.

17. Elected members of the ExComm may be removed from office for cause by vote of at least two-thirds of all other members of the ExComm or by recall election. A recall election may be called by a petition citing the reason for such action, and signed by at least 10% of the membership of the local group as listed on the most recent membership roster provided by AML. The balloting provisions of a regular election shall apply except that a recall election must be held within 60 days of presentation of a properly qualified petition at either a regular or special meeting of the ExComm, and the dates set forth in Article V shall be adjusted appropriately.

18. Any voting member of the ExComm may be removed from office for three consecutive unexcused absences at ExComm meetings, by a majority vote of the remaining members. A majority of the remaining members may excuse an absence.

19. The ExComm shall select a replacement for any ExComm member, other than the President, who resigns, or is removed, or is recalled, or moves up to the position of President in

accordance with Article III, section 3. A replacement for an elected officer is considered to be an elected officer whose term of office ends with the next regular election.

20. All elected and appointed officers shall turn over all files, equipment, and materials pertaining to their offices to either their successor(s), to the current President, or to another member of the ExComm no later than four weeks after leaving office unless otherwise stated herein.

21. An annual financial review shall be conducted each year at approximately twelve-month intervals. The ExComm shall appoint someone to conduct the review who was not involved in the issuing or collecting of money during the period being reviewed. The review shall include viewing statements from banks and any other institutions where the group's money was held during the period being reviewed.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings or activities may be held at such times as may be appropriate; however, a regularly scheduled meeting of the ExComm and a membership activity must be held at least once a quarter. Notice of meetings and activities shall be published in the newsletter (or otherwise sent to each member) and shall be provided to the RVC. A simple majority of all members of the ExComm constitutes a quorum to transact business.

2. Special ExComm meetings may be called at any time by the President or by the ExComm, and shall be called upon receipt by any member of the ExComm of a petition made in writing signed by at least 10% of the membership of the local group as listed on the most recent membership roster provided by AML. The date, time, place, and purpose of the special meeting shall be announced or reported in the newsletter (or by direct mail or e-mail) and shall be provided to the RVC. No business other than that indicated in the notice calling the meeting may be acted on.

3. All meetings of the ExComm shall be held within the geographical limits of the local group as assigned by the AMC, or at a location approved by the majority of the ExComm, except as provided in Section 4 of this article.

4. Any one or more voting members of the ExComm may participate in a meeting of the Committee, by means of telephone or on-line conference, or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

ARTICLE V. ELECTIONS

1. No later than August 1st of each odd-numbered year prior to the even-numbered election year, the ExComm shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of three members which shall, no later than the deadline for the November issue of the newsletter, nominate one or more

candidates for each elected seat on the ExComm. The membership of the local group shall be notified of these nominations in the November/December issue of the newsletter or by mail posted no later than November 1st.

2. No later than November 1st of each odd-numbered year prior to the even-numbered election year, the ExComm shall appoint an Election Committee of three members who shall be responsible for conducting the election, receiving and counting the ballots, and certifying the results. The term of the Election Committee expires on April 30th of the even-numbered year subsequent to elections in January of the same year. The Election Committee shall determine, and cause to be published in the newsletter, the ballot and those election rules and regulations not covered by these bylaws. In so doing, the Election Committee shall strive to maintain the anonymity of voters.

3. No member of the Nominating Committee or Election Committee may be a voting member of the ExComm or a candidate in the upcoming election. The Nominating and Election Committees may comprise the same members.

4. No later than December 1st, of each odd-numbered year prior to the even-numbered election year, additional nominations may be made by petition signed by five (5) members of the local group and delivered to the Chairman of the Election Committee.

5. At the closing date of petitions for nominations, any nominees who are unopposed shall be declared elected without balloting. Write-in votes will not be allowed.

6. Ballots shall be printed in the January issue of the newsletter or mailed to all members of the local group, but in either case posted no later than January 1st of the even-numbered election year. Ballots must be returned to the Chairman of the Election Committee and received no later than January 31st of the even-numbered election year. Ballots received after that date shall not be counted. Ballots may be returned by mail or in person. A plurality of valid votes cast for each office shall constitute election. Votes that are tied shall be determined by the Chairman of the Election Committee by a flip of a coin. The Chairman of the Election Committee shall certify the

Mensa Manners

(from *Minnesota Mensa Members' Handbook*)



Mensa manners are basically just good sense. By right, Mensans can, will, and do talk to each other about everything under the sun. Each of us, however, is free to choose whether or not to listen. No one has the right to force his or her presence, conversation, or point of view on you. If someone tries, just walk away. If the person persists...complain.

Many, but not all, Mensans enjoy being hugged. Don't assume ... ask!

results of the election to the President and shall have the election results published in the March issue of the newsletter.

7. Any challenges to the election must be made in writing to the Chairman of the Election Committee and received by March 10th of the even-numbered year subsequent to elections in January of the same year. Any such challenges must be ruled on by March 20th of the even-numbered year subsequent to elections in January of the same year. Any actions by the ExComm while a challenge is pending are not affected by the outcome of any such challenge.

8. The outgoing President shall notify AML and the RVC for the local group of the results of the election within two weeks of the election.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by the ExComm or by a written petition signed by ten (10) per cent of the members of the local group and received by any member of the ExComm. Such proposals shall be submitted first to the AMC for its approval to ballot. After approval to ballot has been received, the proposed amendment(s) shall be published in the next issue of the newsletter. A mail ballot shall appear in the issue of the newsletter that follows publication of the proposal and shall be sent to every member of the local group. The balloting deadline shall be no less than 90 days following the first publication of the proposed amendment(s) in the newsletter. To become effective, an amendment to these bylaws shall require an affirmative vote of a majority of those casting valid ballots, as well as final approval of the AMC and filing of revised bylaws with the Bylaws Committee. The Bylaws Committee will tell the local group the effective date of the bylaws as amended.

ARTICLE VII. MENSA LOGO & NAME

American Mensa, Ltd. (AML) has granted a royalty free, non-exclusive license to Vermont Mensa for the use of the mark "Mensa" and a logo, consisting of a globe over a stylized "M" within a border, in connection with the non-commercial uses of Vermont Mensa. AML retains full ownership of the mark and logo and all statutory and common law rights in the mark and logo.

ARTICLE VIII. PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE & RULES OF ORDER

1. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, latest edition, shall govern the local group in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with these bylaws.

2. The Minimum Standard Bylaws for Local Groups of AML are implicitly included in these bylaws. The minimum requirements are enforceable even if they are not explicitly contained in these bylaws. If there is a conflict between these bylaws and the Minimum Standards, the Minimum Standards take precedence.

