

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

(January-February 2004)

By Tony Jackowski – RVC7

As I write this column it is the middle of January and we are having a mild winter in Kansas City as far. Hope everyone had a wonderful holiday, and now that we have shaken off the confetti and lost a few of those pounds we gained (insert laughter here), it's time to get back to business. There are a lot of things to discuss so let's get to it.

PROXYQUEST

Unless you have been hiding under a rock these past several months you are well aware of the campaign being conducted by AML to solicit your proxy vote for an all-important issue...our Certificate of Incorporation. Quite a few of our regional members have already submitted their votes on-line, or sent them by mail to the National Office. However, the majority of our members have NOT submitted their votes as yet.

I can not stress enough how important this is to our organization and to you as members. We MUST amend our Certificate of Incorporation to allow mail-in votes during elections and bylaws referenda. It has been noted that our current COI does not provide for this method. Your proxy vote is needed...NOW...in order for AML to obtain the required number of votes in order to amend the COI. If we are not able to obtain the necessary amount (50% of the entire membership plus 1), we will probably have to continue with this campaign until we do. That could take several months or a year longer than we would like.

How does this affect you? The longer it takes for AML to obtain the required number of votes, the more it is going to cost. That's money taken away from other areas where it might be needed, and might possibly lead to a dues increase in the near future.

A few of our members expressed concern over the wording of the proxy (indicating that the member was providing their proxy for other than the issue at hand). Let me make this clear...this proxy is to be used solely and explicitly for the purpose of amending our Certificate of Incorporation to allow for mail-in votes. The time of the proxy is listed past the Annual Business Meeting at the AG in order to allow for further soliciting of proxies should we not reach our required minimum by that time.

So please (picture your dedicated, caring, beloved RVC on bended knee), I urge you to submit your proxy now. Use the proxy forms from the December 2003 Bulletin, or go to the AML website to submit online. Whichever way you choose is fine, but do it now. (Hop off soap box now.)

Below is listed the latest numbers of proxy votes submitted in our Heartland Region.

07/500	Central Iowa Mensa	181	34	18.8%
07/570	South Dakota Mensa	73	13	17.8%
07/585	North Dakota Mensa	55	15	27.3%
07/640	Mid-America Mensa	695	148	21.3%
07/655	Missouri Ozarks Mensa	105	23	21.9%
07/670	Sunflower Mensa	156	34	21.8%
07/680	Nebraska/Western Iowa Mensa	173	42	24.3%
07/685	Lincoln Mensa	85	25	29.4%
07/800	Denver Mensa	652	124	19.0%
07/803	Boulder Mensa	137	27	19.7%
07/808	Plains and Peaks Mensa	175	50	28.6%
07/811	High Mountain Mensa	103	33	32.0%
07/820	Wyoming Mountain Mensa	68	18	26.5%

CONGRATULATIONS to High Mountain Mensa for having the highest percentage of members submitted their proxy. Any other group out there thinks they can unseat High Mountain as the top vote getter? Let's see what you got. Consider yourselves challenged.

PRP JUDGES WANTED

Marc Lederman, Chairman of the Publications Reward Program (PRP), is soliciting members of all the regions to be a part of his committee. Marc is seeking at least one, but preferably two, members from each region to help select the best newsletters from around the country. Various categories of awards are available from artwork and poetry to reporting and short stories. All that is required is an ability to read and enjoy receiving newsletters or reviewing websites from all over AML. The time involved is well worth the effort. If anyone is interested in being a part of this committee please contact Marc by early February at his email address: prp@us.mensa.org

RVC MISSING

It has been over 6 months since the AMC election and yet I still receive regional newsletter listing Steve Burnham as the RVC. While I'm sure Steve does not mind this, I would greatly appreciate it if the editors could review their newsletters and make sure that the members have the current RVC contact information. I can not help our members if they do not know how to reach me. My complete contact information is listed below for your benefit. I'm beginning to feel unloved (sigh). Thanks.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Well, here it is, 2 days after the disastrous KC Chiefs playoff game (my son Ryan and I attended the game on Sunday, which is why I am so hoarse today and only able to write to communicate). This has absolutely nothing to do with Mensa, Region 7 or any of our members or issues at hand. I just wanted to put my head on your shoulders and get your sympathy votes (sound of weeping inserted here for dramatic affect).

REGIONAL GATHERINGS

Region 7 (that's us), is the one region which has the fewest RG's each year. In fact, there are only a handful of local groups that have conducted an RG in the Heartland (Kansas City – Mid America Mensa, Lincoln Mensa, and Denver). Central Iowa has put on a great party in the past but it was usually a one night affair. I would like each local group to consider hosting an RG in the near future. There are a lot of resources available to assist members in how to put on an RG. An RG is usually a weekend event but can be a one day gathering for those groups which have never held one before. I have chaired numerous gatherings (including the Annual Gathering in 1991), and am here to help get you started. An RG is a great media event and can increase a local group's bank account and membership roster if an admissions test is conducted in conjunction with the RG. It's not as hard as you might think. What do you say? Want to give it try? Give me a call or email me and we can discuss the options that would best suit your needs.

LDW COMING

At this time, I am looking into the possibility of having a Leadership Development Workshop in 2004. Details are still being worked out and sorted at this time. More information will be distributed when the list of presenters and dates are firm. In the meantime, if you simply can't wait until I can get my act together, Region 4 is planning a LDW in Davenport, Iowa, on March 13. It will be held at the Best Western Steeplegate Inn (563-386-6900), and rooms are available from Mar 12-14, at the rate of \$69/S and \$79/D. This rate also includes a hot breakfast buffet. If you are an officer in your local group, or hope to someday become an officer, I would highly recommend attending an LDW. Not only are they very informative, but they are a lot of fun as well. If you are interested in attending the Region 4 LDW in Iowa, please contact the Region 4 RVC, Cyndi Kuyper, at RVC4@us.mensa.org. Cyndi has asked if I would like to assist, so who knows...you might even get to meet me there <g>.

AMC MEETING

The next AMC meeting is scheduled for March 19-21, 2004, in Charlottesville, VA. If you happen to be in the area at the time please stop by and say hello. Stay and watch your AMC in action, and attend the Jefferson County RG (see January Bulletin for full details). If you can't make the RG or meeting, and you

have an issue that you would like to bring to the board's attention, please contact me. We can discuss if it is a board issue or something which can be worked out regionally or locally.

MINIMUM STANDARD BYLAWS

Many local groups are in the process of updating their bylaws to incorporate the minimum standards approved by the AMC. What you may not be aware of is that your local group is already bound by those minimum standards even if they are not a part of your current "official" bylaws. ASIE (now named Standing Order) 1984-104, dated 10-Nov-1984, reads:

"That the provisions of the Minimum Standard Bylaws Requirements for Local Groups of American Mensa, Ltd., are included in every Local Group's bylaws, and are enforceable as such whether explicitly stated or not, and that whenever a Local Group amends its bylaws, those bylaws must be brought up to date with the current Minimum Standard Bylaws Requirements".

With this in mind I would like to suggest that every local group which has not reviewed the Local Group bylaws in over 2 years, please do so now. You might find that the bylaws you thought you were operating under are no longer in effect. If anyone has any questions regarding bylaws and the minimum requirements please contact Russ Bakke, Chairman of the Bylaws Review Committee, at FirstViceChair@us.mensa.org, or call him at (714)771-5477.

LOCAL GROUP OMBUDSMAN

A problem in one of our local group's recently made it known that not every group in Region 7 has appointed an Ombudsman to help with local disputes. If your group does not have an Ombudsman to help resolve disputes between members or the local board, I would highly recommend that you appoint one as soon as possible. Problems are best handled on a local basis before they escalate. Appointing a local member as an Ombudsman makes good sense since this person is in the best position to know some of the members that might be involved in a dispute, and can handle the various personalities. Please consider appointing a Local Group Ombudsman.

MIND GAMES

Mid-America Mensa member Joe Blake is trying to get a group together to go to Mind Games this year. He has asked if I would include something about this in my column. Here is what Joe writes:

From Joe Blake - Mid-America Mensa

Mind Games will be held at the Radisson Hotel O'Hare in Chicago from April 16 through April 18, 2004. I am willing to coordinate transportation to Chicago for this event. I can secure a special rate for AmTrak transportation to and from Chicago. Round Trip fare for Adults is \$70.40, children (ages 2 through 15) are \$35.20, and senior citizens (age 62 and older) are \$59.84. (For comparison, regular fare for adults for these travel dates is currently \$150. AmTrak has even raised their regular fare for these travel on dates from \$100 to \$150 since I first started putting this together, so we would be getting tickets at less than half price from what it would cost to book your own travel at this time!) We must have a group of at least 20 traveling in order to get this rate. If I can get a group of 75, we will have a car to ourselves. Call or e-mail me as soon as possible if you are interested in traveling to this event with a group of fellow Mensans. Mind Games starts Friday afternoon, and winds up around Noon on Sunday, so the AmTrak schedule will work well for this event. Traveling by train is more relaxed than by air, and the trip to and from Chicago should be as fun as Mind Games itself.

The train schedule is as follows:

Leave K.C., train #4, Friday, April 16, 2004, 7:29 AM
Arrive Chicago 3:20 PM.

Leave Chicago, train #3, Sunday, April 18, 2004, 3:15 PM
Arrive Kansas City 10:10 PM

Registration for mind games is \$65 until March 31, 2004. More information for Mind Games can be found at <http://mindgames.us.mensa.org>

The hotel room is \$89/night per ROOM - up to four people may stay in one room. You may make room reservations directly with the hotel at 800-333-3333. Tell them you are registering with the Mind Games event to get the special rate. I am only coordinating the train travel to Chicago and back to Kansas City. You must make your own hotel and Mind Games reservations. If you are interested in traveling as a group at this special rate, please let me know as soon as possible! Also, I must have full payment for your train fare no later than Monday, February 23, 2004. Thank you!

joeblake58@earthlink.net

(785) 448-4767 (home)

(785) 448-5411 (work)

Well folks, I guess that's about it for this time (isn't it enough????). To recap: please consider submitting your proxy, think about hosting an RG, correct your newsletter contact information, become a PRP judge, review your bylaws, consider appointing an Ombudsman, attend the LDW, go to Mind Games and have a great winter. See you next month. Until then...Keep watching the skies (sorry, had to use that old line from the 1950's movie "The Thing From Another Planet").

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