

San Francisco Regional Mensa

***Member's
Handbook***



November 2006



Welcome to Mensa

San Francisco Regional Mensa, Your Local Group

Welcome to San Francisco Regional Mensa! SFRM is an unusually populous chapter of American Mensa (though not an unusually large one geographically). There are nearly 2,000 members in the San Francisco Bay Area, making us the third-largest local group in the country. You are part of our group by reason of geography or because you have chosen to participate from beyond our borders by preference.

SFRM covers a large portion of Northern California, taking in the San Francisco Bay Area and several Central Valley counties, including Fresno. SFRM is part of Region 8 of American Mensa, "Pacific Intermountain," which covers much of the western United States. American Mensa, 50,000 members strong, belongs to International Mensa, consisting of some 100,000 members in more than 100 countries, organized into more than 40 national groups.

History

Mensa was founded in Great Britain in 1946. In 1960, American Mensa began, with offices in New York City. There were no local groups, only members scattered thinly across the country.

The first meeting of what was later to become SFRM was held in the early 1960s, with only four people in attendance, representing half the membership. A possibly apocryphal story exists that some years later the question of whether the group had a future was discussed. The conclusion was that it did not. Nevertheless, with a little help from exposure in *Playboy* and *Reader's Digest*, the group continued to grow. SFRM covered all of Northern California, extending to the Oregon and Nevada borders. By 1969, SFRM had more than 400 members and the calendar was full. A sometimes serious Monthly Gathering was held ten times a year, and business meetings were a monthly event. That year, SFRM hosted the first Annual Gathering held outside of New York.

The 1970s saw growth for SFRM and American Mensa as a whole. By the mid-'70s, SFRM had nearly 3000 members and was the largest local group in America, if not the world, vying with New York and Los Angeles for this honor. San Francisco and SFRM both had the reputation of being liberal, independent, and hedonistic, a reputation that resulted in strain between our local group and National.

SFRM hosted the 1980 Annual Gathering in San Francisco. The Wine Country Regional Gathering (RG) in Santa Rosa was founded in 1982 and quickly became a favorite, featuring trips to local wineries. Two Regional Gatherings were also held in San Francisco. The continued growth of the local group during the '80s and the success of the social calendars and gatherings meant that several subgroups, including Sacramento and Redwood Empire, became large enough to be self-sustaining and broke off to form new local Mensa groups. Even then, SFRM remained the largest local group in American Mensa.

In the 1990s, SFRM hosted the 1992 Annual Gathering in Burlingame. SFRM joined the Internet Age with an e-mail list first hosted on the LocSec's home computer system, then migrating to a commercial service. We soon added a website. The popular "FisherMensaWharf" RG in San Francisco was founded. But through the '90s, SFRM, like American Mensa, experienced declining membership. The monthly calendar,

while still enviable among the groups, was somewhat thinner than in the previous decade.

This decade has seen SFRM remain one of the largest local groups in the country, although its membership is about two-thirds of what it was at its peak. Mensa Asilomar, the prototypical Mensa Gathering held annually in Pacific Grove since 1964, came to an end. Following several years' hiatus, the SF RG was revived as the "Brilliance By The Bay" RG. In 2004, SFRM adopted an Executive Committee style of government, replacing the Town Meeting form it had previously. SFRM has a full calendar of events and is justly proud of its diverse membership.

Members and Activities

Our members reflect the area in which we live. We have a wide variety of occupations, including doctors and lawyers, students and administrators. Many of us have come to the Bay Area from somewhere else. Almost all of us like good conversation and good food, but beyond that, we are interested in computer technology, space science, trains, planes, movies, art, gifted children, elder issues, wine, song, alternative medicine, Wicca, science fiction, murder mysteries, travel, hiking, and, well...you name it. Most of us treasure this diversity of backgrounds and interests.

The group sponsors a Monthly Gathering and an annual Regional Gathering, and individual members host a variety of events: potlucks, parties, restaurant outings, games nights, movies, and discussions. Some events, such as Start the Month Right, have been going on for many years; others come and go.

Getting Started—A Special Note to New Members

Mensa is for those who rejoice in the exercise of the mind. If you enjoy mental challenges and revel in the interplay of ideas, Mensa is an organization that will stretch your mind and expand your horizons. We are an international society for people who score in the top 2% on intelligence tests. Our purpose is to provide and encourage social and intellectual interaction among diverse intelligent people.

Being an active Mensan adds a new dimension to your life. The obvious, new friends and stimulating conversation, is only part of your gain. The not-so-obvious is your feeling of belonging, somewhat like coming to a family reunion.

Some people feel it's hard to break into Mensa social life. Not to worry. There are two basic approaches to becoming active in Mensa. We invite you to take either one, or a combination of the two.

The Introvert's Approach

Read this handbook. It provides answers to the most-asked questions of new members. Read your local newsletter to get to know some of the names and activities. Join the e-lists and just read.

Call your local Area Coordinator or one of the members of the ExComm or appointed officers. They are eager to help you and will be glad to answer your questions about Mensa and our local activities.

Attend an event. You might start with something close to home, and then branch out as you get to know us. Try a few activities before you make up your mind about what we're like. Each event is different and attracts

different people with different interests. Shop around for the people you feel at home with. Go and just listen. When you absolutely can't stand keeping quiet any longer, speak up. If your idea has merit (and of course it has; look who *you* are!), you are launched in that conversation.

By the time you have attended a couple of events, you will see some of the same people again. They will begin to recognize you. "Hi." "Hi." "Try that cheese over there—it's great."

The Extrovert's Approach

Attend a few events. Turn to the calendar pages of the *Intelligencer*, your local newsletter, or check the online calendar on the website, pick an event that is of interest to you, and come on over!

One month later: reading the newsletter, you notice a vacancy in the list of appointees and you immediately e-mail the LocSec to volunteer.

Next three-day weekend: you are going to attend your first Regional Gathering!

Mensa is a do-it-yourself, or volunteer, society. You are a participant, not a guest, and one of the easiest ways to get involved is to make a contribution. You can just show up at the "Peel and Stick" party where we bundle the *Intelligencer* for mailing, or you can offer your services to the LocSec to fill a need that has been noted in the newsletter. You can also host an event in your home, where you get to choose the refreshments and make the house rules, or in a public place, such as a restaurant or museum. Or start a Special Interest Group (SIG) from the privacy of your home, via the mail or e-mail.

Once you mingle in the event circuit for a few months, do not be surprised when someone asks you to volunteer for something!

The All-Volunteer Crew of SFRM

Elected Officers

SFRM has eight elected officers serving two-year terms. The Executive Committee (ExComm) consists of all elected officers except the Ombudsman. You can contact the entire ExComm by sending e-mail to ExComm@sfmensa.org. The Bylaws contain more formal descriptions of the duties of elected offices. The Bylaws and the current ASIEs (see glossary) can be found on the SFRM website.

Local Secretary LocSec@sfmensa.org

President and CEO of the local group. The term "Local Secretary" goes back to Mensa's British roots and is not something we will give up lightly, even though it does cause confusion outside the club. The LocSec (pronounced "loke-sek") presides over the Executive Committee, who are the only members of the group empowered to make decisions for their term of office.

Assistant Local Secretary VP@sfmensa.org

The vice president. This person is also elected to office and helps share the work of the LocSec. The office is, occasionally, a steppingstone to LocSec.

Scribe Scribe@sfmensa.org

The secretary. The scribe's official duty is taking minutes at ExComm meetings and shipping them off to the editor of the *Intelligencer* for publication in the newsletter. Occasionally there is a need for the scribe to manage correspondence.

Treasurer Treasurer@sfmensa.org

Manages funds received from National and other sources, pays out expenses, and generally keeps SFRM's books.

Members-At-Large

We have three. This new office in SFRM is still being defined. It is likely to handle special functions, such as Membership and Activities.

Ombudsman Ombudsman@sfmensa.org

Mediator for disputes between members, backed up by the *Mediator's Handbook*. The ombudsman is **not** a member of the Executive Committee and does not vote.

Appointed Officers

Activities Officer Activities@sfmensa.org

Promotes and coordinates activities in SFRM, including Monthly Gatherings, Regional Gatherings, and other events.

Archivist Archivist@sfmensa.org

Keeps official SFRM records safe for future generations of Mensa members.

Area Coordinator (AC)

The ACs' job is to help the LocSec in this large geographic group of ours, to generate activities in their areas, and to answer members' questions. You can find your AC's name and contact info in the *Intelligencer*.

Elections Elections@sfmensa.org

Every two years, leads a committee to find candidates and run a fair election for the eight elected positions within SFRM.

E-list Manager Elistmgr@sfmensa.org

Oversees the SFRM Telegraph e-mail lists.

Gifted Children Coordinator (GCC) GC@sfmensa.org

Plans and promotes activities for the gifted children of Mensa members and children who are themselves Mensa members.

Membership Chair Membership@sfmensa.org

The contact person for new and prospective members and for members visiting from other groups. Welcomes new members and Ms moving into SFRM, organizes New Members parties, and helps members with such matters as membership renewal, address changes, and other local or national services.

Monthly Gathering Coordinator Program@sfmensa.org

Plans and hosts SFRM Monthly Gatherings. Arranges for programs, speakers, locations, refreshments, and greeters.

Publicity Officer Publicity@sfmensa.org

Gets out the word about what SFRM is doing, when, and where, both to the public at large and to wider Mensa audiences.

RG Chair RGChair@sfmensa.org

The RG Chairperson plans and oversees our annual Regional Gathering. We've been putting on a great party—"Brilliance by the Bay"—for some years now.

Scholarship Chair Scholarship@sfmensa.org

Manages the annual scholarship essay contest, including distributing applications, recruiting judges, and communicating announcements, especially in coordination with Publicity Officer.

SIGHT Coordinator Sight@sfmensa.org

Arranges for out-of-town visitors to spend a day, or more, with volunteer hosts.

Testing Coordinator Testing@sfmensa.org

Organizes the monthly testing sessions and schedules the proctors, the people who administer the Mensa-approved entrance test to prospective members. There are no retests for members, despite persistent rumors.

Webmaster

Webmaster@sfmtensa.org

Holds overall responsibility for designing and maintaining the SFRM website, <http://www.sfmtensa.org>.

Newsletter Staff

Editor-in-Chief

Editor@sfmtensa.org

Gets the newsletter put together and printed. This includes copy editing, writing, layout, proofreading, and dealing with contentious letter writers. The editor is typically assisted by others in auxiliary functions, such as advertising, calendar, proofreading, and special features.

Advertising Manager

Ads@sfmtensa.org

Handles both free and paid ads in the newsletter. Paid ads help us balance the budget.

Business Manager

BusinessMgr@sfmtensa.org

Leads the troops through the Peel and Stick and deals with the U.S. Post Office monthly to get your newsletter to you. Your contact if your copy of the *Intelligencer* is missing or mangled.

Calendar Editor

Calendar@sfmtensa.org

Receives notices of events and puts them into some coherent order for publishing in the newsletter and on the website.

Circulation Manager

Circulation@sfmtensa.org

Knows the secret formula for sorting the mailing labels for the Peel and Stick.

Puzzle Editor

Puzzles@sfmtensa.org

Comes up with some dandies in the *Intelligencer*.

How Can I Get More Involved?

It's so easy! Call the LocSec or other officers and they can supply you with a position almost immediately. In virtually every issue there are listings of diverse opportunities for volunteers.

Electronic Communications

SFRM Telegraph

San Francisco Regional Mensa operates an M-to-M online communication service under the name of "SFRM Telegraph." Currently hosted by Yahoo!® Groups, there are four channels:

1. SFRM-News

This is the announcements channel. It is used to e-mail reminders or additional information on scheduled events, ads, and so on. Please do not reply to the SFRM-News channel, as it is not for discussion on any topic.

2. SFRM-Discussion

- Lightly moderated
- No messages of an explicit, insulting, or abusive tone, or swearing. (This list is open to minors.)
- Moderators will investigate complaints about specific posters and messages.

3. SFRM-FreeForM

- Open to members of SFRM aged 18 and older
- Unmoderated

4. SFRM-Intelligencer

This channel is used to distribute our newsletter electronically to members using the Adobe PDF format. If you subscribe to the e-mail

Intelligencer, you will still get a printed copy in the mail, but you will receive the electronic copy earlier.

To subscribe to any or all of the SFRM Telegraph channels, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SFRM-Telegraph>. Click on the "Join This Group" button. When you join the SFRM-Telegraph, you will be subscribed to the News, Discussion, and FreeForM lists. You can also join each of these independently by clicking on the link for the subgroup you want and then clicking on "Join This Group" for that subgroup. You can choose to receive individual e-mails or a daily digest or to read the group online.

Websites

San Francisco Regional Mensa

<http://www.sfmtensa.org>

There are currently no restricted areas, so you don't need a password. Our website has officer contact information, publicity for major events such as RGs, a monthly calendar of activities, and general information for members and prospective members, including upcoming testing dates.

American Mensa

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

For the Members Only section, you will need your *membership number* (it's printed on your mailing label) and the *password* you were given when you paid your dues. Once you're in, you can change the password to another password of your own choosing.

Calendar of Events

The SFRM Calendar is filled with events occurring throughout the Bay Area, including dinner, movie, discussion, or games groups, ExComm meetings, parties, trips, and classes. These are held in members' homes, restaurants, and even outdoors, and in numerous locations around the bay and beyond. Some events on the calendar occur regularly, such as ExComm meetings and monthly dinners and parties, and other events are one-time offerings. All of these are hosted by individual members except for the ExComm meetings and the MG. It's up to the membership to fill the calendar with events.

Our calendar is easy to find. It's included in each issue of the *Intelligencer*, and many—but not all—events are listed on the SFRM website. Any rules, requests, or special notes by the host are included in the event's calendar description, often in coded form, such as RSVP, BYOB, RSE, or NMPCW (definitions of codes are also in the calendar). Additional social events that do not appear in the calendar may also be communicated via the SFRM-News channel (see SFRM Telegraph). A public version of the calendar can also be found on the SFRM website. These are events that are explicitly noted as PC ("public calendar") and omit home addresses; non-public calendar events are listed in the printed calendar only. If you would like to host an event and list it in the calendar, please follow the instructions in the *Intelligencer* calendar heading.

Beyond the local calendar are the regional and national events: RGs all over the country, Colloquia, MindGames, and the AG. Check out the National calendar listings in the *Bulletin* or on the American Mensa website.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Potentially one of the most gratifying benefits of your Mensa membership is participation in a local or national special interest group, through which you can interact with members who share your interests. Twice-yearly listings in the *Bulletin* (March and September) give details of dozens of national SIGs that have newsletters, e-lists, or websites.

If you are unable to locate an interest that you feel should be offered or if there is no existing SIG for one of your interests and you wish to help initiate such a group or interest, contact the LocSec. SIGs are voluntary associations of Mensa members that operate independently of Mensa.

Mensa does not exercise control over the finances or activities of SIGs, and no SIG or SIG coordinator is authorized to bind Mensa or to act in any way on Mensa's behalf. No SIG may use the word "Mensa" or the M of our logo in its name.

cise reminder to the M announcement e-mail list at SFRM-News@yahoo.com.

Blueprint for a Satisfying Mensa Event

Not enough on the Mensa calendar for you? Would you like to host your own event? Whether it's a one-time activity or a regularly occurring affair, here's what to do.

1. Choose an activity.

"I love playing Go." "I want to meet Ms near me." "I want some brainstorming on this idea." "I bet some other Ms would enjoy this performance." "Let's party!" Be innovative on a broad theme or a specific interest. Or rely on a simple old favorite such as sharing a meal and conversation. It is perfectly OK to copy an event you see somewhere else in Mensa, making it fit your schedule and region.

2. Choose a location.

You don't have to have a large home to host an event; even a small apartment can host a warm and cozy event. Many apartment complexes have an activities room that they make available to tenants free or for a nominal cost. Restaurants, coffeehouses, and bars are favorites, providing not only food and drink but plenty of space as well. Other popular meeting places are the public library or a bookstore, but be sure to check with the management in advance. Let people know if parking or public transit is available.

3. Choose a date and time.

First and foremost, pick a time that is convenient for you. Then pick one that will be convenient to others. More people will be able to join you in the evening than for a lunchtime event, and more on the weekend than on a weekday. We generally try to avoid conflicts with other recurring M events close by; the Calendar Editor can help with this.

4. Choose refreshments.

It has been said that leading Mensans is like herding cats. It's always easier if there is food. If you meet at a restaurant, everyone's on his or her own (chances are someone will become the accountant at check time). At home, if you are an accomplished partygiver, you may wish to provide something from your kitchen. It's easier, though, to make it potluck. Everyone can bring something that fits his or her taste. You will need to provide (paper) plates, cups, napkins and the like. Most SFRM events are BYOB—bring your own favorite beverage.

5. Write up the calendar entry.

You may want help finalizing plans. Your Area Coordinator, the Activities Officer, or the Calendar Editor might be able to narrow down your choices, avoiding crowded dates and suggesting ideas. Describe the event briefly, but in enough detail that other members will know what the event is. Be sure to include your contact information and any special instructions.

6. Send it in to the calendar.

The deadline for the calendar is listed in the calendar (usually in the first week of the month before the publication date of the newsletter). Give yourself lead time of at least five weeks. You can also submit a listing for the following month to be listed under "Future Flashes." The easiest way to submit an event notice is to e-mail your entry to Calendar@sfirmensa.org.

7. Spread the word.

You might want to ask someone to co-host. Have a few friends (Mensans or not) at the core of the event. You might send a con-

8. Do the prep.

If it's in your home, be ready with the setting, and remember the paper goods and ice. If it's away, confirm the reservations. You may want to provide nametags and a marking pen to help people make new friends.

9. Relax and enjoy!

You did this to enjoy yourself, right?

10. Congratulations.

Did you meet some new faces? Did you learn something new? Write up a report and send that in to the *Intelligencer*. Most people love reading about themselves having a good time. Did someone take pictures? Send them, too.

11. Repeat from 1.

If it worked once or even if it didn't, do it again. Improvements over time make for classic recurring events.

Mensa Etiquette

Our roving reporter ran into an etiquette maven at a local event and was treated to some sage advice from the most proper of the proper.

Etiquette Maven: Mensans are generally a very accepting group, but there are a few things that will raise your standing in the group.

Mensa Reporter: Like what? Are there really rules of etiquette for Mensans?

It's true that Mensans will put up with all kinds of annoyances, so long as you do not interfere with their talking and eating, so they hold a great many potlucks. And what do we bring to a potluck?

A bag of pretzels?

Very funny. As a friend of mine says, non-paupers arriving at the potluck without goodies to share will be pointedly glared at—and gossiped about after they leave. We are clear now, aren't we, about the potluck food groups—main dishes, side dishes, salads, and desserts? You should bring one of these and enough for five or six medium-sized servings. (Often you are asked bring a beverage as well.)

Now, many folks use a potluck to try a new recipe or show off with an old favorite. But what if you have not yet mastered the technique of boiling water? Or you just got off the plane from Rangoon, and the potluck is your first stop before heading home? There are delis in almost every major supermarket. Drop in and pick up something a little bit special.

Remember, canned corn or a bag of prunes does not qualify as a main dish. The idea of a potluck is to share a meal with friends, not to load up as cheaply as possible. You can hardly expect your fellow diners to produce scintillating conversation on such mean fare. If you have any questions about what to bring to a potluck, contact the person hosting the event.

What do hosts provide for an event?

You can expect your host to provide the basics for the event: hot and cold cups, plates, napkins, cream(er), sugar (and fake sugar), stirrers, and bottle opener, including corkscrew. A knife for brownies is the only utensil I'm likely to supply. If your potluck contribution will require other utensils or will need to be reheated, either bring the necessary utensils or contact the host or hostess in advance. Please take the time to wash up afterwards.

Am I supposed to send a thank-you note after a party?

It's always nice to say "thank you," but parties in the calendar are rather casual affairs. A formal note is not necessary. But do remember that you

are a guest in someone else's home. Keep your feet off the sofa. Do not feed the goldfish or attempt to reorganize your host's book collection. Smoke only where indicated. In fact, do read the calendar entry as to the purpose and parameters of the gathering, including the calendar codes.

Pay special attention to the starting and ending times. It's fine to arrive any time after the event is scheduled to begin. As hostess on a weeknight, I'll be rushing home from work, feeding my cat and myself, listening to my voice mail, doing last-minute setup. I am not happy entertaining those people who wander in early and expect me to start listening to them. If the first arrivers pitch in, answer the door, and stay in the living room while I complete last-minute preparations, OK.

Most of them are BYOB. Does that second B always mean booze?

It means beverage. Really, no one should ever feel they must drink alcohol if they do not wish to. You should bring whatever you like to drink and expect to share it with others. It is a party, after all. Of course, if the only wine you can tolerate is Chateau Lafitte, you may want to mark your bottle as private.

And be careful how much you drink. You may think you have *savoir faire* to burn, but if you can't pronounce it, you don't have it. Each person has different limits, but if you are driving, no more than one drink in an hour should keep you below the legal limit. If people begin suggesting they drive you home or that you should take a cab, trust them, and do so. Do not take offense; they are concerned for your safety. And if one of your fellow Mensans seems a bit out of focus, offer him or her a ride home.

But I wouldn't want to impose on my friends.

It's much less imposition to give you a ride home when you need one than to put them in the awkward position of deciding who should serve as your pallbearers.

What about going home?

Oh, yes, I think you should. Unless you have a definite invitation from the host or hostess, don't try to be the last one to leave. Invitations may already have been tendered to others, and it may be that the last one to leave won't be leaving until the next afternoon. I do appreciate those who stay to clean up, detecting empty dishes under the chairs, picking up garbage, and recycling. But if I wanted to talk to you all night, I would have led you to the bedroom instead of the front door.

I'm always running late. What should I do?

Have you considered having your watch repaired?

Being late is not usually a problem, but let's be reasonable. Showing up at midnight for a 7:30 event would be appropriate only if you were recipient of one of the aforementioned personal invitations. If you are going to be significantly late to an event where you are expected, or one with a distinct starting time, such as a discussion, give a call in advance.

What about a call when I'm on my way?

This will probably not be appreciated. It's an interruption in the activities for something that could have been handled earlier. Calling an hour after a speaker is scheduled to begin to ask if he's really speaking is another *pas* of the *faux* kind.

What about getting directions?

This is something that can be done in advance as well. You are more likely to catch the hosts in a communicative frame of mind if they are not also trying to welcome guests at the front door. Usually, directions are published in the calendar. Furthermore, you can go online for maps and directions. When you get there, be sure to park appropriately. Many hosts reserve their driveway for people in wheelchairs or who have difficulty walking. Don't block the neighbor's drive, either.

I keep seeing things that require advance reservations. Why?

There may be a requirement to purchase tickets in advance to get them in a block, or a restaurant may need to know how big a table to reserve. Some may want to limit the number of people who try to crowd into a small apartment. I've even heard that some hosts want to know how much chocolate to order. These are details that must be arranged in advance.

Well, speaking of advances...

Ah, yes, the eternal chase. Sometimes it is all too eternal. The sad truth is that even if you are attracted to someone, the feeling may not be reciprocated. You should keep in mind that "no" is a complete sentence, and doesn't require an explanation. Most people do not like to be put in a position of having to be blunt—they have been taught the manners that I grew up with. Be sensitive to the fact that not getting a direct answer to your request for a phone number is a polite way of saying no. Pressing for what is not given willingly is the mark of a boor, and we wouldn't want that to be our reputation, would we?

If you get cornered by someone who won't take a hint (and that does happen in many groups from time to time), step away and join another conversation. You might even say that you need some rescuing. It is best to deal with the issue in real time, letting the miscreant know that the behavior is not socially acceptable ("Sir, you forget yourself!") and reporting it to the host immediately. In other words, do what you need to do to extricate yourself with grace from unwelcome situations. Clear communication of standards and reports of unacceptable behavior to event sponsors will create a better atmosphere.

Can I bring a guest to a Mensa event?

Hosts may invite and admit anyone they choose. Significant others of attending Mensans are welcome. You may also bring a friend, your teenager, your parents. Guests should feel no uneasiness—they won't be asked their IQ, they will not be quizzed or tested. (You'll notice that Mensans rarely talk about their IQs. It is politely assumed that everyone is smart or they wouldn't be here.) In fact, with many couples who attend events, the rest of us don't know or care which one is the member.

Hosts may also choose to dis-invite those who do not behave themselves according to the house rules.

This seems a little complicated.

Most of good behavior is just common sense. If you have any questions about appropriate behavior, ask your hosts. Regard their home as their castle—treat it with utmost respect.

Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations, and Mensa-Speak

AC	Area Coordinator. An appointed officer of SFRM who serves as a contact point and promotes activities for a specific geographic area.
AG	Annual Gathering. American Mensa's national convention and annual business meeting, often held over the Fourth of July weekend, meeting in various host cities around the country. Other national Mensas also have AGs—a travel opportunity!
AMC	American Mensa Committee. The Board of Directors of AML (the national and regional elected officers plus selected appointees) is the governing body of American Mensa.
AML	American Mensa, Ltd. The legal name of our national organization.
ASIE	Actions Still In Effect. Motions passed by the ExComm or the AMC that are currently in force.

Bulletin	The national magazine of American Mensa.	MindGames	Annual national games competition, where Ms select the top five new intellectual games. Held in the spring.
CAP	Community Activities Program. National recognition for community service activities.	MM	Male Mensan.
Carnelli	A title-association game in which each person offers a title of a book, song, movie, etc., that shares a word, author, or performer in common with the preceding title. Invented by Mensa members, it is often played at RGs and AGs.	MTD	Mensa Testing Day. An annual blitz of proctored exams for Mensa admissions. Held in the fall.
Colloquium	A national gathering devoted to serious discussion of topics relevant to society or science.	National or NO	The national office of American Mensa, Ltd., our administrative HQ in Texas. National handles membership renewals, address changes, and other things.
CultureQuest®	A contest in which teams from the U.S. and Canada are tested on their general knowledge; the quintessential trivia contest. The top 20 teams earn scholarship funds for their local groups. Held in the spring.	PDQ	Personal Data Questionnaire. Information you gave Mensa when you became a member or when you renewed your membership.
Densan	Either someone with an IQ in the bottom 2% or a Mensan acting like a jerk.	Peel and Stick	A monthly get-together to stick address labels on newly printed <i>Intelligencer</i> copies and bundle them according to the dictates of the U.S. Postal Service. Volunteers get early copies, snacks, and unlimited praise.
ExComm	Executive Committee. This is the governing body of SFRM. It generally meets monthly, and meetings are open to all members of SFRM as observers. Members may also request to be heard at a meeting.	Proctor	An AML-certified Mensan who administers standard entrance tests to prospective members at the local level.
Fishbowl	A game in which questions are submitted anonymously by a team composed of one gender to be answered without interruption by a team composed of the other gender.	Project Inkslinger	A continuing national project to collect books and funds that are donated to libraries.
FM	Also FeM. A female Mensan.	Region	One of ten geographical subdivisions of American Mensa. Not to be confused with SFRM, which, despite having “regional” in its name, is merely a local group.
GC	Gifted child(ren).	RG	Regional Gathering. A convention sponsored by a local group, generally a weekend of speakers and other presentations and entertainment, games, and partying.
GenX	The local Generation X population defines itself as those whose birthdays fall in the range from 1 January 1960 through 31 December 1980.	Roster	A directory of SFRM members (except for the ones who opted out in their PDQ) published annually in the <i>Intelligencer</i> .
IBD	International Board of Directors of MIL, made up of officers and representatives from national groups.	RVC	Regional Vice Chair. Officer who serves on AMC, elected from 1 of 10 regions.
IJ	The <i>International Journal</i> of Mensa International, Ltd. In the U.S., a portion of the IJ is published in the <i>Bulletin</i> , with the remaining part available online.	SFRM	San Francisco Regional Mensa. The best local group in the nation, no, the world.
Intelligencer	The monthly newsletter of SFRM, which includes the calendar of events.	SIG	Special Interest Group. A group of members sharing a common interest. There are a few locally and many dozens nationally, many with websites, online discussion groups, and newsletters.
InterLoc	A publication of American Mensa for local and national officers and interested members dealing with business and leadership issues. Any member may subscribe free.	SIGHT	Service for Information, Guidance, and Hospitality to Travelers. An international network of volunteers offering hospitality to Ms who visit their cities. They offer lodgings sometimes, or show the sights, or put the visitors in contact with the local group and activities.
LDW	Leadership Development Workshop. Training volunteers to run Mensa.	WG	World Gathering. Representatives from Mensa from all around the world attend.
Local Group	One of approximately 140 chapters of the national organization.	WorldConnect	Program that pairs local groups with other groups around the world.
M	A member of Mensa; a Mensan of either gender. Plural is Ms (pronounced “emz”). FM and MM denote the gender.	Young Mensans	Mensans under the age of 18. See also GC.
Matchbook	An SFRM fund-raising tradition; a personal ads collection and exchange that has resulted in some beautiful relationships.		
MERF	Mensa Education and Research Foundation, also called the Mensa Foundation, a nonprofit body committed to excellence in the areas of intelligence. MERF publishes a journal and makes awards, including scholarships.		
MG	Monthly Gathering. SFRM event, held in various locations around the Bay Area, where a speaker or some other informative or entertaining presentation is given. Refreshments are generally served.		
MIL	Mensa International, Limited. The legal name of our international organization.		

Credits

“A Special Note to New Members”

Portions freely adapted from Kent Akselsen’s article in the *Tampa Bay Mensa Member Handbook*.

Thanks to the many contributors to this Member’s Handbook, including Meredy Amyx, Michael Eager, Francesca Guido, Erinn Height, and others who contributed to this and past member’s handbooks.

San Francisco Regional Mensa Bylaws

November, 2004

Article I. Designation

Section 1. Name and Definition

- A. The name of this not-for-profit organization is San Francisco Regional Mensa (hereinafter, SFRM).
- B. SFRM is a local group of American Mensa, Ltd. (AML), subject to the Constitution of International Mensa, the American Mensa Bylaws, and resolutions passed by the American Mensa Committee (AMC), including the current minimum standard bylaws for local groups.

Section 2. Jurisdiction

SFRM shall include San Francisco county and such geographic areas as may be assigned by AML or AMC.

Section 3. Purpose

The purpose of these Bylaws is to clarify items that International and American Mensa leave to the discretion of local groups.

Section 4. Logo

AML has granted a royalty-free, nonexclusive license to SFRM 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 noncommercial uses of SFRM. AML retains full ownership of the mark and logo and all statutory and common-law rights in the mark and logo.

Article II. Membership, Privileges, and Responsibilities

Section 1. Membership

Membership in SFRM shall consist of members of AML in good standing who reside in San Francisco county and such geographic areas as may be assigned by AML or AMC, plus members of AML who reside elsewhere but have been assigned membership in SFRM by AML. Excluded are members of AML who reside in the geographic area of SFRM but who have been assigned membership elsewhere by AML.

Section 2. Privileges

- A. Only SFRM members in good standing, as shown by the most recent monthly roster issued by AML, may vote in SFRM elections.
- B. Every Mensa member in good standing may attend and participate in SFRM activities with the same rights and privileges accorded members of SFRM, without qualifications or limitations other than those set forth herein.
- C. Attendance at any SFRM nonbusiness activity held in a private home is subject to the permission of the host.

Section 3. Responsibilities

Every Mensa member participating in SFRM activities, and every member of SFRM, shall, at the Ombudsman's request, cooperate fully with any investigation by the Ombudsman.

Article III. Requirements

Section 1. Records

- A. SFRM officers shall maintain records of their Mensa business activities.
- B. No SFRM business shall be confidential from SFRM members. All SFRM files shall be available for examination by any SFRM member on reasonable notice. Exceptions shall be legal and personnel matters and the records of the Ombudsman and those of the newsletter Editor insofar as they pertain to names withheld from publication.
- C. The fiscal year shall be 1 July through 30 June.

Section 2. Publications

- A. SFRM shall provide for the monthly publication of a newsletter and calendar of events.
- B. SFRM 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.

Section 3. Activities

SFRM shall conduct regular member activities, in addition to meetings of the Executive Committee, at least quarterly, with notice of such activities distributed to all members by publication in the newsletter and/or calendar of events.

Section 4. Representation

No member of SFRM may act for, speak for, enter into an agreement or contract on behalf of, or commit SFRM in any way unless such action is within the scope of that member's office or has been approved by the Executive Committee.

Article IV. Officers and Duties

Section 1. Officers

- A. Each officer shall be a current member in good standing of AML and SFRM.
- B. The elected officers of SFRM shall be the Local Secretary/President, Assistant Local Secretary/Vice President, Treasurer, Scribe/Secretary, the Ombudsman, and three Members-at-Large. These officers shall be elected every two years. Their terms of office shall be from 1 December of the year elected through 30 November of the second year following election, both being even-numbered years.
- C. Only members of SFRM who are current members in good standing of American Mensa, Ltd., are eligible to seek or hold office.
- D. No person shall seek or hold more than one elected office in SFRM at a time.
- E. Any officer with fiduciary responsibility must be bondable.

- F. Outgoing officers shall transfer their files to their successors within fifteen days after leaving office.
- G. The LocSec shall appoint an Editor responsible for the publication of a monthly newsletter and calendar of events. The Editor shall establish editorial policy and provide for the timely production and distribution of the newsletter and calendar of events to the membership.

Section 2. Duties of Officers

- A. The Local Secretary/President (LocSec) shall:
 - i. Serve as Executive Officer of SFRM, liaison with other local groups, and the chief point of contact between AML and SFRM.
 - ii. Pass along information to and from SFRM in a timely fashion.
 - iii. Notify AML (through the national office) and the Regional Vice Chairman within two weeks of the results of elections and of changes in SFRM officers.
 - iv. Preside at meetings of the Executive Committee of SFRM.
 - v. Prepare and publish agendas to be considered by the Executive Committee meeting.
 - vi. Appoint and remove appointed officers and designate duties for such officers not otherwise provided for herein.
 - vii. Establish and abolish ad hoc committees, appoint and remove chairpersons thereof, and define and limit the duties and durations thereof.
 - viii. Appoint a committee to perform an annual financial review to be conducted in the month of December. Such committee shall consist of one or more members not involved with collection or disbursement of SFRM funds during the period being reviewed. Such review shall include the review of actual statements from banks or other financial institutions where SFRM money is on deposit.
- B. The Assistant Local Secretary/Vice President (Assistant LocSec) shall:
 - i. Preside at Executive Committee meetings in the absence of the LocSec.
 - ii. Assume such duties as may be requested by the LocSec.
- C. The Treasurer shall:
 - i. Establish separate financial accounts in the name of SFRM which have at minimum Treasurer and LocSec as signatories.
 - ii. Receive funds and make prompt disbursements as authorized by the Executive Committee.
 - iii. Render a financial report to be submitted to the Executive Committee quarterly and published in the

newsletter. It shall contain schedules of income, expenses, and balances for all funds, including RG, Scholarship, and other special funds, under the control of SFRM.

- iv. Provide the LocSec (or the LocSec's designee, who must be a member of the Executive Committee) original statements from banks and any other institutions where the group's money is deposited, at least quarterly. All accounts shall be separate accounts in the name of SFRM, and shall have more than one signatory so that funds can be accessed in the temporary absence of the Treasurer.
- v. Maintain a list of all property owned by SFRM.
- D. The Scribe/Secretary (Scribe) shall:
 - i. Take and preserve Minutes of every Executive Committee meeting and record the attendance of elected officers thereat.
 - ii. Promptly deliver to the newsletter Editor transcriptions of the Minutes for publication in the newsletter.
 - iii. Maintain an accurate copy of these Bylaws and all motions currently in effect.
- E. The Ombudsman shall:
 - i. Mediate disputes arising among members of SFRM or otherwise relating to the activities of SFRM.
 - ii. Report findings and recommendations to the Executive Committee on matters of general concern.
 - iii. Initiate relief measures where appropriate.
 - iv. Serve as arbitrator as required by the Regional Hearing process.
- F. The Members-at-Large shall:
 - Assume such duties as may be requested by the LocSec.

Section 3. Vacancies

- A. In the event that the office of LocSec becomes vacant, the Assistant LocSec shall automatically and immediately succeed to the office of LocSec for the remainder of the term.
- B. In the event the office of Assistant LocSec, Scribe, Treasurer, or Member-at-Large becomes vacant, the vacancy shall be announced in the newsletter and the LocSec shall, at the first Executive Committee meeting following such announcement, fill such office by appointment, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
- C. If the office of Ombudsman becomes vacant, a special election shall be held within three months to choose a successor. Except for timing, the special election shall be subject to the election rules of Article V. The LocSec may appoint an Acting Ombudsman in the interim.

Section 4. Removal of Officers

- A. Any officer who has two or more unexcused absences from regularly scheduled Executive Committee meetings within a 12-month period may, by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Executive Committee, be removed from office.
- B. A recall election of any elected officer may be called by a petition citing the reason for such action signed by one hundred SFRM members or ten percent of the membership of SFRM, whichever is less. Except for timing, the special election shall be subject to the election rules of Article V and must be held within sixty days of the presentation of a properly qualified petition to the Executive Committee.
- C. Sixty percent of the votes cast shall be required to recall the officer(s) under consideration. The recall shall take effect immediately.

Section 5. Appointed Officers

Appointed officers shall perform the activities designated by the LocSec, shall maintain current records of those activities, and shall keep the LocSec fully informed of those activities. The term of such appointment shall be at the pleasure of the LocSec but shall not exceed the term of the LocSec.

Article V. Elections

Section 1. Schedule

Opening of nominations and nominating procedures for election of SFRM officers shall be announced in the August newsletter of even-numbered years. A list of candidates to date shall be available upon request from the Chair of the Elections Committee. Nominations shall close on 1 September. Ballots and balloting procedures shall be printed in the October newsletter.

Section 2. Election Committee

- A. The Election Committee shall consist of three members in good standing of SFRM, to be appointed by the LocSec no later than 1 June of each year. Members of this committee shall be ineligible to run for office. Current elected officers of SFRM shall be ineligible to serve on this committee.
- B. The Election Committee shall:
 - i. Actively seek candidates for each position.
 - ii. Accept the written nomination of any eligible member who agrees in writing to be nominated.
 - iii. Solicit, receive, and publish platforms for candidates in the October newsletter. The Election Committee shall not modify platforms, except they may truncate platforms exceeding a preset length.
 - iv. Prepare the rules for the election and present them to the Executive Committee. The election rules must include nomination procedures; campaign practices; format, limitations, and deadline of official campaign statements; balloting procedures, including the deadline and including that ballots may be returned

by mail; and procedures for the certification and counting of ballots. The election rules must be published in the August newsletter.

- v. Prepare a ballot for publication in the October newsletter; the ballot shall include the deadline and the method(s) for returning marked ballots.
- vi. Receive, validate, and count votes, and report results to the LocSec and the newsletter Editor in writing within five days of the close of election. These results shall include the count of valid ballot envelopes, invalid ballot envelopes, valid ballots, and invalid ballots.
- vii. Ensure secrecy of vote.

Section 3. Conduct of Elections

- A. Balloting shall be on ballots provided by the Election Committee or on a facsimile thereof. Ballots shall be mailed to every member of SFRM. Deadline for receipt of ballots by the Election Committee shall be 31 October.
- B. The candidate receiving a majority of the votes cast for each office shall be elected to that office. In case of a tie for any office, the winner shall be decided immediately by a coin toss.
- C. If only one person is nominated to any office, that person shall publicly be declared elected. All other nominees must be placed on the ballot. There shall be no write-in votes.
- D. If there are more than two candidates nominated for any office, the preferential voting system described in *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be used.
- E. The Election Committee shall accept formal written complaints regarding the election for up to five days after the vote count, and shall respond to such complaints within five days thereafter. The Election Committee has final authority and responsibility to arbitrate disagreements between candidates and rule on challenges.
- F. In case of a violation of the election rules, or of any attempt to improperly influence the election through fraud, harassment, bribery, intimidation, or other means, the Election Committee has the final authority and responsibility to censure any member and to censure and/or disqualify any candidate. Such action shall be reported in the SFRM newsletter.
- G. The Election Committee shall destroy all ballots, envelopes, and vote count materials fifteen days after the vote count, or when all formal written complaints are resolved, whichever is later.

Article VI. Meetings

Section 1. Governing Body

- A. The governing body of SFRM shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the following representatives of the members of SFRM: the LocSec, the Assistant LocSec, the Treasurer, the Scribe, and the Members-at-Large.

Section 2. Executive Committee Meetings

- A. All members of SFRM shall be notified of the time, place, and agenda of each Executive Committee meeting by publication in the SFRM newsletter. Any member may attend the meeting, and may address the Executive Committee at the discretion of the chair. Actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported to the entire membership prior to the succeeding Executive Committee meeting.
- B. Regular Executive Committee meetings, and regular membership activities, shall be convened at least bimonthly within the geographic boundaries of SFRM.
- C. A quorum shall consist of four members of the Executive Committee.
- D. Each elected or appointed officer, or that officer's representative, shall report on all Mensa business transacted since the previous regular Executive Committee meeting.
- E. A special meeting of the Executive Committee may be called by the LocSec at any time and must be called upon receipt of a written request for such meeting signed by twenty SFRM members or two percent of the membership of SFRM, whichever is less, or by four members of the Executive Committee. Notice of such special Executive Committee meeting must be announced in the next issue of the newsletter or, at the option and expense of the petitioning members, by a special mailing to the entire membership of SFRM. The special Executive Committee meeting shall be held no sooner than fifteen days following the mailing of said notice. The date and time, place, and purpose of the special Executive Committee meeting must be stated in said notice, and no other business may be conducted at such meeting.
- F. The National Ombudsman, or surrogate, and members of AMC in the discharge of their responsibilities may attend and participate in the business activities of SFRM; other Mensa members who are not members of SFRM may do so upon invitation by the LocSec or Executive Committee.
- G. The Executive Committee may excuse the absence of one of its members by a majority vote of the remaining members.

Section 3. Special Interest Group Meetings

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) shall be convened by their coordinators and/or as agreed upon by participating members; they are free to establish their own meeting times and places.

Article VII. Rules of Order

Section 1. General Reference

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, latest edition, shall be the referent governing procedure for the conduct of all business of SFRM that is not otherwise specified in these Bylaws.

Section 2. Special Interest Groups

SIGs shall be free to develop their own rules of procedure.

Article VIII. Fees

Section 1. Calendar Events

SFRM calendar events shall be self-supporting except as directed by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Special Interest Groups

SIG expenses, at the option of the coordinator and with the knowledge of the LocSec, may be met by contributions from participating members. SIG financial records shall be made available to any member of the SIG upon request.

Article IX. Amendment

Section 1. Proposal

- A. Changes in these Bylaws may be initiated by a petition to the Executive Committee signed by fifty SFRM members or ten percent of the membership of SFRM, whichever is less.
- B. Alternatively, two successive Executive Committee meetings may initiate amendments as follows:
 - i. The earlier meeting approves a change to these Bylaws by a majority vote.
 - ii. All members are notified of the proposed change by its being placed on the agenda for the later meeting.
 - iii. The later meeting approves the change by a two-thirds vote.

Section 2. Adoption

- A. Proposed changes shall be submitted to, and approved for balloting by, the AMC prior to their placement on the ballot.
- B. Ballots, with arguments by members pro and con, shall be mailed to all members of SFRM following AMC approval. There shall be not less than ninety days between notification to the members of the proposed changes and the deadline for returning the ballots. Amendment balloting shall be conducted in the same manner as provided in Article V for elections, except that the LocSec, rather than the Election Committee, shall conduct the balloting.
- C. An affirmative vote of sixty percent of the ballots cast is required for proposed changes to pass.
- D. The Bylaws as amended shall be submitted to the AMC for final approval. The AMC will notify SFRM of the effective date of the Bylaws as amended.

Subscribe to the Online *Intelligencer*

Point your browser to

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SFRM-Intelligencer>

and click "Join This Group." Be sure to supply your name and Mensa membership number in the "comments" box.

After your subscription is approved, you can receive the electronic *Intelligencer* and access back issues.

Actions Still in Effect

As of August 29, 2006

1994-1: The Statement of Purpose for SFRM is adopted: “The purpose of San Francisco Regional Mensa is to provide and encourage social and intellectual interaction among diverse intelligent people.”

1995-1: All requests for reimbursement to Mensa members of \$25 and over must be accompanied by receipts (rev. 12/04).

1995-2: The subscription rate for the *Intelligencer* for out-of-area Mensa Members shall be determined by the Subscription Manager and shall not exceed double the local member’s subscription rate.

2001-2: SFRM shall, on an annual basis, publish a roster, the bylaws and Actions in Effect. These may be published in separate issues at the discretion of the editor.

2002-1: See 2005-5.

2002-2: The *Intelligencer* Editor and the Calendar Editor are allowed to dispose of any materials over one year old.

2002-3: All motions of twenty-five (25) words or more must be presented in writing to the Scribe.

2002-4: Selection of scholarship winners shall be left to the discretion of the Scholarship Committee.

2002-5: Attendance at Mensa functions will be limited to members, accompanied guests of members, candidates for membership and prospective members. Candidates and prospects shall be limited to three (3) visits.

2002-8: Candidates for membership are defined as those who have passed the entry test or who otherwise meet the qualifications of Mensa membership. Candidates for may be sent the current *Intelligencer* at the LocSec’s discretion (rev. 12/04).

2002-9: Events for personal profit may not be listed in the published calendar of events. The Calendar Editor shall have the sole power of decision to determine whether an event is qualified for inclusion in the calendar.

2002-10: Each SFRM member may place one (1) free ad per month at the discretion of the Editor. Except for seasonal ads (e.g., tax preparation), the same or similar ad may not be placed more often than once every three (3) months.

2002-11: SFRM’s bounced check policy is to charge the maker ten dollars (\$10.00) or the amount of the bank fees, whichever is greater. The failure to make good on the check and charges for a returned check within sixty (60) days of notification shall be reported to the RVC with a request that membership not be renewed until such time as the check and fees are paid.

2002-12: An SFRM local group scholarship fund shall be maintained. There shall be one (1) scholarship for five hundred dollars (\$500) and two (2) at two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) each. Recipients need not be members of Mensa or eligible for membership.

2003-1: A Code of Conduct for SFRM e-lists shall be published with the specific prohibition against *ad hominem* attacks.

2005-1: All reimbursement requests must be submitted within six months of the date the expense is incurred.

2005-2: The *Intelligencer* budget is increased by \$25/month to cover the printer’s delivery charge. [Covered in new budget 8/05.]

2005-3: The Parental Permission and Release Form for Minors is adopted and to be published on the SFRM website.

2005-4: As part of the SFRM 40th anniversary celebration, a monthly \$40 award will be given to a member who has placed an event in the *Intelligencer* calendar (details to be worked out). [Completed.]

2005-5: The LocSec is to receive a stipend of twenty dollars (\$20.00) per month, with no receipts required. Amounts over this stipend must be approved by vote at an ExComm Meeting (rev. 8/05).

2006-1: The Scribe is authorized to pursue appropriate legal actions up to and including small claims court to regain our archives.

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