

From the RVC:

In my 35 years of Mensa membership, I have noticed that the favorite pastime of some Ms (very few, thank goodness) seems to be pontificating at length on subjects about which they know little or nothing. I don't know why they do this, perhaps in order to make themselves seem more knowledgeable, and hence more interesting, than they actually are, but for whatever reason, they insist upon doing at every opportunity. Now, unfortunately, an opportunity has arisen which they find well-nigh irresistible.

Some of you are undoubtedly aware that American Mensa Ltd. has, for the last couple of years, been involved in a lawsuit against a foreign company which applied for trademark registration of a name which included the letters "mensa". AML opposed their application, and when they declined to make some modest changes in their logo, a suit was filed. All of this was a normal and rational reaction to an attempted infringement on our name, which we have spent a great deal of time, effort, and money to publicize over the years.

Last month this lawsuit finally came to trial, and while the jury found in our favor on the issue of our ownership of (and hence the right to defend) the trademarked name "Mensa", they were unable to award us monetary damages, due to an unfortunate ruling by the judge. Consequently, AML was unable to recover our attorneys' fees, which were much higher than anyone had expected at the commencement of the litigation, when it was expected that the parties would be able to reach a settlement. As a result, the AMC has voted to make some minor adjustments in the current year's budget to help offset the expense of the lawsuit.

Now, the decision is being appealed, and thus the lawsuit is still on-going, so the AMC members, including myself, cannot yet divulge the details of the actual litigation, but I can tell you that the costs of the suit are being paid, and the budget adjustments are largely limited to details of administration affecting the way that the AMC and the National Office operate. There are a very few proposed new programs which will be postponed for a year or two, but no current member benefits will be affected. In other words, you will not even be aware of the changes that have been made.

There are, however, a handful of members, including (I'm sorry to say) my predecessor as RVC, who have chosen to disseminate false and malicious rumors that Mensa is somehow "broke" and facing financial ruin. Nothing could be further from the truth. The AMC Finance Committee has done an excellent job of managing our resources so that the outcome of this litigation, whatever it may be, will have virtually no impact on the activities and benefits available to the membership. If you hear otherwise, it is from someone who is either ignorant of the facts, or deliberately trying to stir up trouble for their own amusement.

Roger Durham