

From the RVC:

At the recent meeting of the American Mensa Committee, the AMC decided to make a change in the way Local Groups can send out their newsletters. Up to now, every LG was required to mail a paper newsletter to every member except those who had previously requested electronic distribution. The justification for this was that American Mensa paid each LG a per-member amount each month to cover the cost of publication. Over time, however, many groups found that the amount they received from the national organization no longer covered the cost of printing and mailing a newsletter to every member. The first change in this system was made several years ago, when the per-member amount paid to each LG was both increased and decoupled from newsletter mailing, so LGs could e-mail their newsletters (to those members who would accept electronic distribution) without decreasing their monthly income. That helped for a while, but last year the Post Office announced a plan to change the bar-coding format for mailers using periodical mailing rates (nearly all of our larger groups) in a way that would make it impossible for our National Office to generate mailing labels that would comply with the new requirements.

After considerable consultation with local editors and circulation managers around the country, it was proposed that the rules for newsletter mailing be reversed: LGs would be required to e-mail their newsletters to everyone except those who requested a paper newsletter. This proposal was quite popular with many groups who saw a chance to save quite a bit of money on newsletter distribution, but was bitterly opposed by others for a variety of reasons. At the Atlanta meeting, therefore, the AMC decided to approve the proposal, effective September 1 of this year, but with a major change: the new process is optional, rather than mandatory. For the next several months, all members will be given the opportunity to request either electronic or print versions of their local newsletter. After that, those members who have expressed a preference will receive whichever kind of newsletter they requested, but the officers of each LG can decide for themselves what kind of newsletter to send to those members who have not made a choice. No matter which way each group decides, their funding will not be affected. Your group will still receive the same per-member amount each month.

You and your local officers will be receiving more information about the new policy in the near future, but in the meantime I want to assure you that, contrary to some of the rumors that have been circulating, this is simply a way to allow your group to save money on newsletter publication, not an underhanded plot to cut local funding.

Don't forget our upcoming Gatherings: the Houston RG over Memorial Day weekend, the AG in Portland, OR from June 30th through July 4th, the Austin RG over Labor Day weekend, and the Dallas RG over Thanksgiving weekend. I hope to see you there! Also, if you haven't voted yet in the national Mensa election, you have until the end of May to get your ballot in. I'd appreciate your support.

Roger Durham

