

From the RVC:

Once again, another year is gone, and it's time to wish all of you a very happy New Year. As I write this in mid-December, I have just returned from the winter meeting of the American Mensa Committee in Las Vegas.

As we begin a new year, perhaps this is a good time to explain to all our newer members that Mensa is very much a self-help organization. At the AMC meetings we consistently hear of members who have dropped out of Mensa because it offered nothing that appealed to them. I can't help but think that this is, at least to some extent, the result of a misunderstanding on the member's part, because what Mensa offers is theoretically almost unlimited. I say "almost" because there is one very significant limitation: your imagination and initiative. Now it's true that if you live in say, San Saba, your social opportunities in Mensa are going to be far fewer than if you lived in Houston, but even there Mensa has many features that could provide significant value to virtually anyone. You, however, are responsible for seeking them out, and if necessary, creating them.

Let me explain: let's say you're interested in Ming dynasty pottery. You look in your local newsletter for a Chinese pottery collector's group, but you don't find one. "Oh well," you say, "Mensa is clearly not for me." But wait – just because no one has put Chinese pottery in the newsletter doesn't mean nobody is interested. There may be 3 other members of your group who would be highly interested in learning more about Ming dynasty pottery, but think there is no one in town who knows enough about the subject to guide them to resource materials. If you put a discussion group in the calendar, inviting anyone to show up who may be interested in Chinese pottery, you might be surprised at the turnout. If you've already looked in the national directory and know that there is only one other member within 50 miles and she is 8 years old, then try asking for e-mails from anyone interested. If that doesn't work, try contacting the National SIG Coordinator to launch a national Pottery Collectors SIG. Out of our 60,000 members, I'd just about guarantee there are some who are as interested as you.

To change the subject, if yours is one of the groups which recently went through local elections and have new officers taking over this month, my sincere congratulations (or condolences) and best wishes to all of you who are newly elected to a leadership position in your local group. Please do not hesitate to contact me (rvc6@us.mensa.org) if I can be of assistance in any way.

Roger Durham