

In late October, I had the privilege of attending the Mensa International Board of Directors (IBD) annual meeting as a National Representative of American Mensa. While I have heard many people talk about how different the organization is at the international level, the theory is always much more abstract than personal experience. Most of the National Mensas around the world are a mere fraction of the size of American Mensa. Some are the same size as one of our regions, while some local groups in American Mensa have up to 10 times as many members as other National Mensas. While we have our share of differences, we're still far more similar. I greatly enjoyed sharing success stories and swapping suggestions for recruitment and retention with the other international delegates. I am incredibly excited about the upcoming opportunity for all of you to meet a wide array of international members. Most of you know that the 2021 Annual Gathering will be held in Houston, TX. One of my duties as a National Representative to the IBD was to present the option to make the 2021 AG a World Gathering in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of Mensa. I am pleased and proud to say that the IBD approved this motion unanimously. Mark your calendars now – August 24-29, 2021 in Houston, TX. You won't want to miss it.

Right after returning from the IBD meeting, I traveled to visit Central Oklahoma Mensa. I was able to spend an afternoon working local members, both longtime volunteers and brand new members to the chapter. We shared best practices and brainstormed about ideas for continuing to develop the group. Trips like this are my favorite part of serving as a Regional Vice Chair. The opportunity to connect with members as we collectively work towards the betterment of the organization is always exciting.

The Mensa experience is a personal one, in that we all get to choose what level of involvement is right for us personally. I have found new hobbies, developed professional skillsets, and made lifelong friends through this organization. I hope you will each explore the offerings of both your local chapter and American Mensa to find the personal connection that is right for you. That connection may be attending events, contributing to your local newsletter or the *Mensa Bulletin*, volunteering at the local level, or even serving nationally on the American Mensa Committee (AMC). December 1 opens the petition window for any members who are seeking to run for a role on the AMC. I encourage all of you to visit <https://www.us.mensa.org/election> during December and January to submit your own petitions or sign the petitions of other members who are seeking a place on the ballot.

Another way to find your personal connection with Mensa is through snazzy clothing. (Nice segue, huh?) The brand new Mensa store is open for the holidays. As someone who is a billboard for Mensa at least once a week, I cannot tell you how thrilled I am that we have so many new options for gear. Check out the store online at <http://www.mensastore.com/>.

As always, I ask that if you have any questions, concerns, or general comments, please let me know. I have created a simple online form where members can offer feedback on any topic, both by name or anonymously. You can find this form at <http://tinyurl.com/AML-R6-Feedback>. Of course, if you prefer, you can always contact me via email at rvc6@us.mensa.org, phone at 512-779-3945, or snail mail at 10518 Horseshoe Bend Dr, Houston, TX 77064.

Taz Criss