

I'm going to let y'all in on a pet peeve of mine. Imagine that a person has just announced that they are volunteering to be an officer for their local group or have been appointed to a national committee. They are excited and enthusiastic. Then, they get one of the following responses:

"You have no idea what you've gotten yourself into."

"Better you than me!"

"Really? My condolences."

I cannot tell you how often I have witnessed this, whether in person or through someone's quippy Facebook post. It drives me nuts! Don't misunderstand, the vast majority of the time, it's clear that the response is meant to be humorous. However, this response is at odds with the frequent problem that local groups face of finding new volunteers for the various roles that help the group function.

Volunteering within Mensa has been one of the most rewarding things in my life. It has allowed me to welcome new members, engage with long time members, and throw some really awesome parties. It is a common trend that our members who feel that they get the most out of their membership are those who actively volunteer.

Members volunteer for a wide variety of reasons. For some, volunteering within Mensa is a great way to learn a new skill. For others, it's easier to meet people when volunteering. For still others, they prefer to volunteer behind the scenes. In fact, all of these reasons have been true for me at some point during my time in Mensa. If you are interested in volunteering within your local group, reach out to your LocSec or President and ask where you can get involved.

We all have a great deal competing for our attention and time. Not every member is going to be able to volunteer, and that's totally okay. Sometimes life happens and when we intended to volunteer, things just didn't work out. I do hope that you will all, whether you currently volunteer or not, take the time to thank the volunteers within your group. If you love your local newsletter, email your editor and tell them so. If you really enjoy an event, let the host know before you leave. The local group experience is entirely driven by volunteers, and data has repeatedly shown us that this experience makes a huge difference in members' overall satisfaction with Mensa.

If this column sounds a bit familiar, that's because I have previously published it, back in February 2017. However, the same sentiment that drove me to write it 2 years ago has been popping up again recently. Each time we were entering the election period for American Mensa, and each time, I witnessed people cracking jokes about the members who put their names forward to serve on the American Mensa Committee. As I type, we have 3 potential candidates to take over the role of Regional Vice Chair for Region 6, but none of them have yet qualified for the ballot. As a reminder, RVC candidates need 100 signatures on their petition to be on the ballot, and candidates for national officer roles need 250 signatures. I would ask that you join me in encouraging these volunteers who are excited to take on a new role by heading over to the website and signing their petitions.

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.

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