

**Workshop: Editors' Resources**  
**Presented by Claire Natola**  
**Publications Recognition Program Chair**  
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**Saturday, May 3, 2008**  
**1:30-2:30 p.m.**  
**Region 1 LDW**  
**Warwick, Rhode Island**

## **What Should Your Newsletter Contain?**

In addition to the identification requirements dictated by your USPS license, American Mensa (AML) **requires** you to publish:

- Activities calendar
- Election information
- Bylaws proposals and referenda
- Treasurer's reports
- Official comments and findings by your Ombudsman

*In fact, your group earns points for Group Of The Year Award (GOTYA) consideration each time you publish an activities calendar, a treasurer's report, and your election results.*

While nothing else is specifically required by AML, the following are recommended as **"high priority"** optional contents:

- RVC column
- LocSec column
- Your editorial policy
- Local Group officer names and contact information
- Editorial remarks
- Officer reports
- Letters to the Editor

Inclusion of the following **enhances** your newsletter's appeal:

- Member profiles
- Member birthdays
- Activity reports
- Puzzles and solutions
- Articles
- Poetry
- Cartoons
- Reprints from other newsletters

It may be beneficial to consider the guidelines used to judge newsletters for the **Publications Recognition Program (PRP) Awards**:

*Presentation (Style, Layout, and Graphics):* The manner and tone of the newsletter should invite the reader to fully explore the newsletter's contents. Style should be consistent throughout the set of newsletters, and achieve a sense of character. The newsletter should have a visually appealing layout that consistently presents the content of the newsletter effectively, without confusing or

distracting the reader and without calling attention to itself. Items should flow visually and logically, from one column or page to another. Graphic elements, including type, illustrations, rules, boxes, shadings, and color should be used to enhance the pages rather than to demonstrate possibilities or to clutter an otherwise readable page. Type sizes and styles should be well chosen and used effectively. The newsletter should regularly include graphics, including artwork and photographs that enhance specific text items and/or the overall appearance of the newsletter. Artists and, when appropriate, media should be identified. The newsletter should be free of typographical errors. It should incorporate good grammar and syntax, correct spelling and punctuation, and easy-to-read contact information with consistent formatting and conscientious notation of dates, times, and addresses where needed, appropriate credits and permissions for reprinted and/or copyrighted material, proper use of the Mensa logo, identification of authors and contributors, and registered trademarks and company names.

*Entertainment:* Original diverse and satisfying entertainment, such as puzzles and games, humor, fiction, poetry, and/or essays, written by Local Group members.

*Calendar (Social and Official Chapter Events):* The calendar should be easy to find and should present events in a manner that both old and new members find inviting and welcoming. Routine events may be described differently in each issue to create and maintain interest. Descriptions should allow the reader to easily determine the nature of each event and should include relevant information, such as time, place, directions, dress, cost, guest policy and contact information where applicable. Language should assure even the most hesitant members that they will be welcome at any listed event. Use of maps, event codes and a calendar grid is encouraged.

Your group earns even more points for Group Of The Year Award (GOTYA) consideration with *each nomination* for a PRP Award.

*Member Recognition:* The regular identification of Local Group members in all reasonable contexts. Recognition in the newsletter, in any number of ways, of as many members as can and should be acknowledged, including (but not limited to) such items as thanks or accolades when appropriate, new member profiles and welcomes, birthday and Mensa anniversary listings, mention of personal or professional achievements, and participation in Mensa events.

*Local Reporting:* The reporting of Local Group status, activities, and events – articles, graphics, and other items that keep members up-to-date on the status of and happenings within their chapter, and inspire potential members to join. Such items include event previews and reviews, photographs from local activities, and business items such as financial reports and meeting minutes.

*Mensa Awareness:* Recognition and awareness of Mensa at the local, regional and national level. Items to be considered include, but are not limited to, Mensa anniversaries, welcoming new members to Mensa, RVC columns and reports, and National Mensa news and reports.

## So Where Do You Find Content For Your Newsletter?

**Inside AML** on the AML Web site is a great resource for newsletter content. To get to Inside AML, go to <http://www.us.mensa.org> and click *Member Login* on the top right. Enter your member number or email address and your password. (Your latest membership card letter contained your login information. If you no longer have that, the National Office can of course assist you.) Once you are logged in, click *Officer Resources* on the left. Congratulations! You've arrived *Inside AML*! Here are your options once inside:

- AMC & Appointees (*see A below*)
- Calendar
- Certifications
- Communications (*see B below*)
- Extra Credit!
- Financials
- Forms and Guides
- Group Officers (*see C below*)
- Handbooks
- Logos
- Member Primer (*see D below*)
- Monthly Distribution (*see E below*)
- Policy Documents
- Tools
- Web Services

*A. AMC & Appointees:* One of the options under AMC & Appointees that can provide you with content for your newsletter are the **Meeting Reports**. Here you will find the most recent (and archives of) reports submitted by the American Mensa Committee (AMC) and its appointees in advance of each of their quarterly meetings. For example, here is the list of reports available from the AMC's March 2008 meeting:

- 2008-03 Preliminary Agenda
- 2008-03 Preliminary Agenda (Budget)
- Mini Minutes
- Chairman
- First Vice Chairman
- Second Vice Chairman
- Treasurer
- Region 1 RVC
- Region 3 RVC
- Region 4 RVC
- Region 5 RVC
- Region 7 RVC
- Region 8 RVC
- Region 10 RVC
- Past Chair
- Past Past Chairman

Here's an example of a tidbit gleaned from the March **Annual Gathering 2008** report that could be passed along to your readership: As of March 21, 2008, registration for the 2008 Annual Gathering in Denver stood at 1,350.

Another tidbit of interest comes from the March report of the 2009 Mind Games Host Committee: The 2009 Mind Games will be held at the Drawbridge Inn & Conference Center in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky (outside Cincinnati, Ohio) on April 24-26, 2009!

- Membership Officer
- Communications Officer
- Development Officer
- Executive Director
- Annual Gathering 2008
- Annual Gathering 2009
- Annual Gathering 2010
- Annual Gathering 2011
- AG Oversight Study
- Bylaws Committee
- Communications Committee
- Community Service Committee
- Counsel, Corporate
- Election Committee
- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee
- Gifted Children Program Coordinator
- Hearings Process Review Committee
- InterLoc Editor
- Leadership Development Committee
- 2008 AG LDW Coordinator
- LDW Coordinator
- LDW Guide Editor
- Licensing Committee
- Local Group Assessment Tools
- Marketing Committee
- Hall of Fame
- Membership Committee
- Mensa WorldConnect Coordinator
- Mind Games 2009 Host Committee
- Name & Logo Committee
- National Events Hotel Consultant
- National Representative, First
- National Representative, Second
- National Representative, Fourth
- Nominating Committee
- Parliamentarian
- Planning Committee
- PRP
- Risk Management Committee
- SIGHT Coordinator
- SIGs Advisory Committee
- Site Selection Committee

*B. Communications:* The options under Communications include eLists; the online libraries of *InterLoc*, the *International Journal*, and *Mensa World*; a repository of Local Group Newsletters; and the Online Community. The following are the **eLists** to which you, other officers, and members may be able to subscribe (those of particular interest to Editors are in bold):

- **AMLNewsFlash: Information updates to any officers and interested members**
- BrightKids: Talk list for members and non members regarding gifted children
- AreaCoordinators: Talk list for Area Coordinators
- **Editors: Talk list for editors and interested members**
- GCC-announce: Announcements to Gifted Children Coordinators
- GCC-Talk: Talk list for Gifted Children Coordinators
- GT: Talk list for gatherings volunteers
- LocSecs: Talk list for Local Secretaries
- MONet: Talk list for Membership Officers
- **Newseditors: Talk list for newsletter editors only**
- Ombuds: Talk list for ombudsmen, mediators and arbitrators
- PRCoordinators: Talk list for PR Coordinators
- Proctor-Announce: Announcements to Proctors and Testing Coordinators
- Proctor-Talk: Talk list for Proctors, Testing and Proctor Coordinators
- Sigcoord-announce: Announcements to SIG Coordinators
- SIGCoord-Talk: Talk list for SIG Coordinators
- SIGHT-Announce: Announcements to SIGHT Coordinators
- SIGHT-Talk: Talk list for SIGHT Coordinators
- WebContacts-Announce: Announcements to Web Contacts
- Webmasters: Talk list for webmasters and interested members
- Region1-talk: Talk list for Region 1 officers and members
- Region3: Talk list for Region 3 officers and members
- Region4-talk: Talk list for Region 4 officers and members
- Region5-talk: Talk list for Region 5 officers and members
- Region6-talk: Talk list for Region 6 officers and members
- Region10: Talk list for Region 10 officers and members

Subscribers to AMLNewsFlash found out on Thursday that anyone who buys a Mensa Home Test in the month of May will receive \$5 off the regular \$18 price, and a coupon worth another \$5 off the \$40 Mensa Admission Test fee if they return the completed Home Test by June 30.

*InterLoc* keeps officers and members informed of American Mensa's administrative, operating, and political activities. The *International Journal* provides articles and advertisements of interest to members worldwide. *Mensa World* is designed to promote national and international growth and to provide a forum for the exchange of members' views, ideas and concerns. Each of these publications can provide content or ideas for your newsletter; several years' worth of archives for each publication are available in the online libraries in the Communications section of Inside AML.

Dozens of Local Groups upload their **newsletters** to the online repository also found in the Communications section. If you would like to read more Local Group newsletters than your current newsletter exchange subscription allows, this is the place to do it. You can also upload your newsletters for other Editors around the country to read.

The **Online Community** is the final option in the Communications section. Here you will find AML's online Forums, the 2% Journals, and the File Vault. *The Forums* are essentially like "bulletin boards" with discussions of a wide variety of topics. The *2% Journals* is another location to find AML News

notifications, *InterLoc* articles, and reprints from Local Group newsletters. The *File Vault* is where you'll find the Officers' Sharehouse; items of particular interest to Editors in the Officers' Sharehouse include logos and graphics (e.g., AG logos, clip art to encourage membership renewal, etc.) and advertisements for gatherings, plus more materials available for reprint from Local Group newsletters (e.g., articles, poetry, and puzzles).

*C. Group Officers:* This option in Inside AML provides documents of interest to particular officers within each Local Group. Clicking on **Editor/Circulation** will take you to lists of Notices, Links, Recent Uploads, Handbooks, Forms, and Policy Documents available for your use.

*D. Member Primer:* This option in Inside AML contains articles that can be helpful to new and veteran members alike on such topics as gatherings, "Mensa speak," volunteering, etc.

*E. Monthly Distribution:* This option in Inside AML discusses the reports distributed each month to Local Group. **Available Reports** outlines which reports are produced by the National Office for the Local Groups (e.g., current membership list, new prospect list) and which officers in the groups receive them. **General Files** contains the monthly "not-group-specific" reports that are distributed to ALL Local Groups (e.g., Group Ranking Report that ranks Local Groups by size).

**Don't Forget: The staff of the National Office, your fellow Editors and former Editors are always available to help you put out the best newsletter you can for your members!**