

From the RVC:

At the recent meeting of the American Mensa Committee, the AMC discussed several possible scenarios for adjusting annual dues. One of the proposals heard was to set up a predetermined schedule for increasing dues by either a set amount or a set percentage every two years, the thought being that this would make it easier for members to plan ahead, rather than being surprised by unexpected dues increases from time to time. Several AMC members, myself included, thought that this idea would be extremely unpopular, not to say irresponsible, and were challenged to come up with alternative proposals. I have some thoughts on this subject, which I will refine over the coming weeks and bring before the Finance and Audit Committee before we take up this discussion again at the Annual Gathering, but in the meantime, I would like to enlist the help of some of you.

The budget we just adopted for the 2012-13 year forecasts a small excess of operating costs over revenues, which is not a problem but does require some kind of action to bring the budget back into balance for the following year. Obviously, there are two ways to do this: either spend less or charge more. Anyone who has been following the national political debate over the last year or so is aware that less spending is a popular mantra these days, but the devil is in the details.

My challenge to you, therefore, is this: if you would prefer to leave the dues rate where it is (or maybe even lower it) and balance Mensa's budget by spending less, tell me exactly what areas you would like to see cut. Would you want your local group to receive less money each month if that would allow us to cut dues? Would you like to see the Mensa Bulletin cut back to a quarterly publication, or converted to electronic distribution? The new budget is still receiving some last-minute tweaks, so it is not yet published, but last year's budget is posted on the national website for your easy reference. If, on the other hand, it turns out to be necessary to increase dues, what would be the best way to do that? Should we apply an increase for inflation each year? Raise dues to match expenses every two years? Hold the line for as long as we can and then catch up all at once every five years or so? What's your preference?

Put those high IQs to work and come up with some creative solutions to this dilemma, then send them to me at RVC6@us.mensa.org, or by snail mail at 9920 Ridgehaven Drive, Dallas, TX 75238. I welcome your input.

Don't forget our upcoming Gatherings: the Houston RG over Memorial Day weekend, the AG in Reno, NV from July 4 - 8, the Austin RG over Labor Day weekend, and the Dallas RG over Thanksgiving weekend. I hope to see you there!

Roger Durham