

## **I. Purpose of the Newsletter**

- A. This policy is adopted by decision of the ExComm. By the bylaws of Boston Mensa, the Editor, as an officer, is bound in the performance of his/her duties by the decisions of the ExComm.

B. Introduction

This section provides a context for the policies that follow. It gives both an explanation of intent in case there are questions of interpretation of the policies, and guidance in areas not covered by specific policies,

C. General principles

The newsletter is a publication of Boston Mensa. As such it should address the needs and interests of the chapter with a positive attitude. This includes both the chapter as an organization and the chapter as a collection of its members. The main principle for decisions concerning the newsletter should be, "Is this for the good of the chapter and/or its members?"

While issues of national or international Mensa, or concerns outside of Mensa, may have an impact on editorial decisions, such issues and concerns may be better addressed in other forums, allowing the chapter newsletter to concentrate on meeting needs that it alone can meet.

D. Information

The newsletter serves chapter members as the primary source of information about the chapter and its activities, and to a lesser extent local and regional aspects of American Mensa. When members need to know what is happening and who is involved, or when there are issues that affect members and/or the local chapter, the newsletter is an appropriate place to provide that information.

E. Communication

The newsletter is also a forum for chapter members to express themselves and communicate with other chapter members. It is an appropriate place for both intellectual dialogue and creative enterprise. To have the newsletter be the voice of its members, publication in the newsletter should be equally accessible to all members.

F. Stimulation

Nobody has to read it, but we'd like everyone to *want* to read the newsletter. Therefore, another guiding concern is to make the newsletter a stimulating publication that members will read.

Since Mensa is an organization of intelligent people, the newsletter should give special emphasis to content that is intellectually stimulating. Informative and thought-provoking articles are highly desirable. Content that includes controversial issues may be appropriate, provided that the purpose is the encouragement of thought and rational discourse on the subject, as opposed to proselytizing or argument for argument's sake.

## **II. Content**

A. Selection of Materials

1. The Editor shall offer balanced and timely publication of opposing views on elections and other issues of general importance to the membership.

B. The Beacon Editor must publish the following items, as well as any additional items mandated by the ExComm.

1. A calendar of future events, including when available: scheduled time(s), a description of the event, a host contact name and phone number, and directions to the event.
2. Minutes of business meetings and minutes of ExComm meetings as approved by the ExComm.
3. Notices of future business meetings and ExComm meetings.
4. Officers' and committee reports as required by the ExComm and/or chapter Bylaws.

5. Local Mensa candidates' campaign statements as required by chapter bylaws.
  6. Local group bylaws, on a regularly determined interval determined by the ExComm, as well as notices of proposed bylaw amendments.
  7. Ballots and results for local elections and referenda.
  8. Notices for the local group RGs.
  9. A disclaimer stating that any opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual members and not those of Mensa.
  10. Notice of policy on publication of letters to the Editor, e.g.,  

"All signed correspondence addressed to the Beacon or the Editor will be considered for publication unless otherwise requested. The Editor reserves the right to edit freely for space or clarity."
  11. Notice of policy on submission deadlines.
  12. Notice of policy on acceptance of advertising as well as rates.
  13. List of local group officers and newsletter staff, including names, positions held, email addresses and phone numbers. USMail addresses must included in the list of local group officers in the register issue or if requested by the officer.
  14. Membership roster, on an interval to be determined by the ExComm.
- C. For those items which are not requirements, the following rules of selection should be helpful in establishing priorities.
1. Mensa-related materials should be selected over non-Mensa-related materials. ("Mensa-related" means directly related to the organization as well as relating to the purpose of the organization, i.e., intelligence, education, etc.)
  2. When choosing among non-required submissions, select in order of priority, submissions written by
    - a. local Mensa members,
    - b. non-local Mensa members,
    - c. non-Mensa members.
  3. The Editor should publish, as space permits, the following items. Note, they are listed in order of priority.
    - a. The LocSec's column, if the LocSec writes one
    - b. Columns and articles by other elected officers
    - c. Columns and articles by appointed officers
    - d. Regional and national election materials
    - e. New member list
    - f. Local RVC reports
    - g. RG and AG notices within the region
- D. The Editor should not publish, under any circumstances, the following categories of items.
1. Material which is gratuitously demeaning to any group.
  2. Any material which a reasonable member would interpret as an attack on the character or person of an individual, whether a member or non-member.
  3. Scatological or pornographic material.

4. The newsletter should not be used disproportionately as a forum for any one individual's point of view, whether the Editor, an officer, or a contributor.

### **III. Procedures**

#### **A. Submission of Materials**

1. Editor must accept typewritten copy, may accept other forms (e.g., handwritten or electronic submission.) The Editor is not required to accept verbal submissions.
2. No anonymous submissions should be published. The Editor may withhold a name from publication or publish under a pseudonym if requested by the author.

#### **B. Editing**

1. The Editor must read everything before printing it.
2. Material may be edited for purposes of space or clarity, including grammar, spelling, and punctuation corrections, but should not alter meaning or intent.
3. The newsletter should be reproduced in a readable type face and type size, and in a format that is attractive and orderly in appearance.

#### **C. Scheduling**

##### **1. Receipt**

- a. The Editor must determine deadline(s) for submissions and publish the deadline(s) regularly.
- b. The Editor may set different deadlines for different kinds of submissions, e.g., calendar items vs. articles, hardcopy vs. electronic submission.
- c. The Editor should enforce deadlines equally for everyone.

##### **2. Review**

- a. The Editor shall provide a means for review of the newsletter before publication.
- b. The purpose of the review is:  
to provide members with an opportunity to view content before publication,  
to allow members to provide input to the Editor,  
to provide members with an opportunity to alert the ExComm to possible violations of editorial policy prior to publication.
- c. All material that is to be published must be available for review.
- d. The purpose of the review is not for authors to lobby for inclusion of their articles or letters.

##### **3. Mailing**

The newsletter should be mailed in time to reach local chapter members before the first of the month.

##### **4. Electronic Distribution**

- a. In light of their contribution to Boston Mensa, if they so request, any ExComm or other appointed officer of the local group (including Ombudsman, SIGHT, etc.) may receive online / email review and / or final copies at no additional cost on a one time or ongoing basis until their position expires. Review copies and the information therein should not be redistributed.
- b. Subscribers may receive online/email final copies of the newsletter instead of their printed copy.

### **IV. External Policies & Regulations**

- A. The Editor should abide by applicable provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of American Mensa, Ltd., the Boston Mensa's bylaws and other governing documents, and the policy of the Boston Mensa ExComm.
- B. The Editor should be guided by the group's budgetary limits. The newsletter should be produced, reproduced, and mailed in as economical manner as possible consistent with good quality of materials, readability of the finished product and timeliness of receipt.
- C. The newsletter must conform to applicable regulations of the Postal Service (in accordance with the interpretation, if any, of the local post office) governing its class of mailing, including (but not limited to) regulations regarding frequency of publication, publication statements, mailing permit number, page numbering, date and volume and number of issue, ZIP sorting of newsletters to be mailed, maintenance of accurate mailing and subscription records, advertising, publication of Statements of Ownership, Management and Circulation, subscription costs, and procedures governing exchange subscriptions.
- D. The newsletter must conform to applicable copyright laws, for example, no copyrighted material may be published without advance written permission of the copyright owner, except in cases where (a) use of the copyrighted material legally constitutes a "fair use" or (b) the materials were original materials of a contributor who offered the materials for publication in the Beacon. Copyrighted material reprinted must state the name of the owner and date of copyright and the fact that permission was granted for reprint.

## **V. Violations of Policy**

- A. Possible violations of the editorial policy should be brought to the attention of the ExComm. Any member of Mensa may make a complaint at an ExComm meeting, or by written notice given to any member of the ExComm.
- B. The ExComm (with the Editor abstaining) will determine if the editorial policy has been violated. Decisions of the ExComm may be appealed (see section 4.10 of the Boston Mensa bylaws).
- C. Possible Actions taken by the ExComm:
  - 1. Minor violations, accidental misinterpretations, or factors beyond the Editor's control, may be forgiven by the ExComm.
  - 2. Most violations of the editorial policy will warrant an official warning from the ExComm. Such warning will be included for publication along with the minutes of the ExComm. After an Editor has received two (2) warnings, further violations of the editorial policy should be considered for censure.
  - 3. For serious, deliberate or repeated violations of the editorial policy, the ExComm may elect to censure the Editor. Notification of censure should be included in the minutes of the ExComm, and be published separately in the Beacon. Under no circumstances should more than two (2) censures be issued to an Editor without also suspending or limiting his/her editorial authority.
  - 4. The most severe penalty the ExComm can issue is a suspension or limitation of the Editor's editorial authority. The ExComm may appoint an Editorial Committee with the responsibility to review all materials for approval before the newsletter is reproduced. The Editorial Committee will have the power to veto any article submitted for publication. The Editorial Committee may also oversee the reproduction, assembly and mailing of the Beacon. The necessity for and responsibilities of the Editorial Committee will be subject to a periodic review by the ExComm.

Passed 8/31/94as an ASIE: Section III, C, 4 added 02/24/02. Section III, C, 2a amended 12/18/02.