

# Central New Jersey Mensa



## Member Handbook

# So I Got In. What Now?

Mensa is like few other organizations in the world. How many others have no innate *raison d'être*? Mensa is the only one whose initial membership requirement is based on a personal characteristic over which an individual has little to no control in determining.

Interesting, huh? So what keeps Mensa going? What's the source of its synergy? It's the riotous merging of Mensans, one with the other...during conversations and debates; while sharing musical preferences and talents; while learning about the mystical and whimsical in the universe; or while facing someone off for the last piece of pizza or picking up the scent of freshly hammered chocolate...*these are Mensan things*.

The spirit of individual members contributes to what Mensa is. Mensa has no "team color," but if it did, it would have to be the mixture of all colors in the visible spectrum, because each member brings his or her sense of adventure, humor, and commitment to the organization and, with these, helps shape the various groups worldwide. To find *real* kindred spirits, there are more than 100 Special Interest Groups (SIGs). What do you like? Astronomy, Magic, Star Trek, Classical Music, Chocolate, Geocaching, Haiku, Games, Photography and everything around and in between. These international sub-sets of Mensa are teeming with intelligent people who share an interest in these particular areas. The beauty of SIGs is that they reproduce asexually...more can be created by simply budding off a good idea. Join one. Start one.

Contrary to popular opinion, Mensa is not sedentary or stodgy. In fact, it's an organization whose components are in constant motion. Just look at an individual chapter's calendar of events and you'll see why. All year 'round there are Regional Gatherings (RGs), parties, guest speakers, and dinner/drinks get-togethers. There is much to learn, great fun to be had, and strong friendships to be enjoyed and treasured.

Welcome to this very unique organization. As everyone's friend, Spock, would say "Live long and prosper" because your experiences and commitment form the synergy that make your Mensa membership what it is.

## Mensa on the Web

American Mensa: [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org)

Region 2: [www.region2.us.mensa.org](http://www.region2.us.mensa.org)

CNJM: [www.cnj.us.mensa.org](http://www.cnj.us.mensa.org) - Our own website where you can find:

- Home
- Calendar – planned activities and events
- Snowball – our RG with details
- Gatherings – Monthly and other gatherings information
- Join! – American Mensa with testing information
- News – Member and CNJM news
- Columns – Various columns from our newsletter Forvm
- Links – to our newsletter, current bylaws, standing orders & other sites
- Contacts – email addresses of various CNJM elected and appointed officers and more
- Awards – CNJM members with local and national Mensa awards
- Children – CNJM Gifted Children's Web Page
- FAQ

[www.facebook.com/groups/CNJMensa](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CNJMensa) – where you can interact with other members of CNJM on Facebook

# Welcome

“The mission of American Mensa is to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity by encouraging research in the nature, characteristics, and uses of intelligence and by providing a stimulating and social environment for its members.”

Central New Jersey Mensa (CNJM) offers informative and entertaining Monthly Gatherings, two annual picnics, Snowball (our regional gathering held annually), Sunday afternoon Bridge games, games nights, the monthly Collating Party, First Friday Happy Hours, a Holiday Party in December, various outings throughout the year, local lunches and the fellowship of the brightest people in the world.

The *Forvm*, our local newsletter, contains interesting articles and a calendar of events to choose from. It's a simple formula. Just attend an event and be entertained while meeting new people. Another option is to plan an activity centered around your interest and put it on our calendar. You'll then have lots of intelligent company to make your favorite activity more pleasurable. Some ideas: a movie group, theatre, dinner, a party, investing discussion, shooting, reading, trips and travel. You can hold gatherings at your home, a friend's home, a restaurant or a park. The possibilities are only limited by our imagination. Give it some thought. It's a great way to bring Mensa to you and also meet Mensans in your area. Our geographical area covers all or part of Monmouth, Middlesex, Mercer, Somerset, Union, Ocean, Hunterdon, Burlington, Warren, and Morris counties.

An Area Coordinator will contact you to welcome you into our group. If you do not hear from one please contact me at: [locsec@cnj.us.mensa.org](mailto:locsec@cnj.us.mensa.org).

Welcome to Central New Jersey Mensa. We look forward to meeting you.

## Our Annual Picnics

Every year CNJ Mensa has two “family” picnics. We generally schedule these events for late spring and early September to avoid the furnace of mid-summer.

The chapter supplies the cooking equipment, picnic tables, plenty of hot dogs, hamburgers, condiments, soft drinks, ice, salads, snacks, fruit, and many gallons of ice cream. Attendees need only bring their appetites and any individual dietary needs. If you want beer or wine, you should bring your own. Lawn games and astronomical viewing are regular additions, weather permitting. One memorable time, enthusiastic conversations lasted until midnight in a howling rainstorm!

For the past few years, we have held our picnics at Bucks Mill Pavilion by a lovely lake in Colts Neck but, of course, that is subject to change. Remember, you have already paid for these picnics through your membership dues. You owe it to yourself to come and get your money's worth!

We announce the dates of our picnics in the *Forvm* well in advance so our members can set them aside. We want everyone to come. The picnics appear in the Events Calendar.

In past years we have held our picnics in various parks and at a member's farm. The board welcomes suggestions for locations for our picnics. If you want to volunteer your expansive back yard and swimming pool, no one would complain.

Our picnics are a great deal. Lots of food. Lots of Mensanly conversation. And an opportunity to meet other members, their families, and significant others. There is no admission charge. We hope that you make every effort to attend.

# The History of Central New Jersey Mensa

(adapted and updated from an article by James P. Morrissey -1986)

Central New Jersey Mensa (CNJM) began in October 1966 under its earlier name North Central New Jersey Mensa (NCNJM). The creator was a local Mensan named David C. Robbins. At that time there were small and scattered Mensa groups in New Jersey but Dave perceived the need for a more active and organized Mensa group and so NCNJM was born. He spearheaded the venture initially performing all the required tasks himself. He founded and personally edited our first local newsletter called *eNCee*. The fledgling group flourished into a strong and enduring Mensa organization.

In the early days of Mensa, leadership of the local groups was vested in the Local Secretaries, called LocSecs, at first appointed but later elected. Dave Robbins was appointed Local Secretary by the power of the national committee. His successor, Wendell Wilson, who took over in October 1968 when Dave moved to Virginia, was also appointed. But the days of one-man rule were numbered as the grass-roots movement for elected leadership was underway. Bob Sisco, who had taken over editorship of the local newsletter, reorganized it and called it *Embrya* in January 1969. A Steering Committee existed then, mostly in an advisory capacity, with little power but managed to develop our first bylaws and elected Bob the first LocSec in March 1969.

Bob returned to full-time education and was unable to complete his term of office. In July 1970 Dave Remine was elected to fill the vacancy. At a regular election in March 1971, Dave was re-elected as LocSec, and became the first LocSec of this group to compete for the job at the polls. Dave has since gone on to other positions in Mensa. He is a Past Chairman of the American Mensa Committee and a past International Chairman.

Under the name NCNJ Mensa our group has had eight LocSecs. To complete the roster: Dave Remine was followed by Allan Blair in May 1973, Lee Werbin in May 1979, Bob Hendricks in May 1983 and Renée Martin in June 1984. Renée was the final Loc-Sec before the change in government to an elected Executive Board headed by a President.

As weaker local groups in New Jersey disappeared, NCNJ Mensa inherited a rather large service territory, along with the problem of learning how to serve it. To deal with this problem, an Area Coordinator system was created in 1979, with Area Coordinators assigned to smaller areas to serve as local contacts. This system is most effective for encouraging new and prospective members to join the mainstream of Mensa activity here.

One of the great assets of CNJ Mensa is the local newsletter. Currently under its fourth name, *Forvm* is the successor to *Embrya* and began under the name *forum* in August 1973. Jan Williams took over the editorship of *forum* in July 1974, modified the name to *Forvm* and created the present booklet format so familiar now to us all. Jan developed the newsletter for six years during which time it achieved wide recognition throughout American Mensa. The editorial torch was relayed as follows: after Jan came Bob Hendricks in 1980, Judith Higgins 1984, Margaret Scherbina in 1988, Royce Edwards in 1994, Judith Matray-Devoti in 1997, Max Fine in 1999, Jasmine Leake in 2008, and Max Fine again in 2012. The *Forvm* very ably serves our "closet" Mensans, members whom we never see but who rely exclusively on the newsletter to keep in touch.

Central New Jersey Mensa has many traditional activities, which date back to the very beginning. In fact, the very first activity was a general meeting arranged by Dave Robbins to bring this local group into being. During the first year of existence there were Open Houses, Discussion Groups, Gifted Children Activities, Outings, Game Nights, Gourmet Groups, and Special Interest Groups of all types.

A hallowed event for our group is the annual Snowball, which is our Regional Gathering (RG). Snowball began in 1975 and continues every year. It was so named from the custom of holding it in February, a month

of snow, at a Catskill Mountain resort location. Later it was moved to the Jersey Shore and currently calls Woodbridge home while retaining the traditional name. As CNJM we twice hosted the American Mensa Committee meetings at Snowball in 1987 (Snowball Chairman- Barry Larson) and again in 2002 (Paul McKeon). Snowball is one of the oldest continuous RGs in American Mensa and is well known to Mensans outside New Jersey who eagerly attend each year.

Under its prior name NCNJ Mensa, our local group achieved a high level of national recognition by successfully hosting the Twentieth Annual Gathering (AG) of American Mensa in June 1982 at Trenton State College under the chairmanship of Dave Remine. This was no small undertaking for our local group.

The year 1985 was one of great change in the formal structure of CNJ Mensa. In addition to the name change, the system of government was changed radically with newly written bylaws. The loosely structured Steering Committee gave way to an elected Executive Board with an elected President as Chief Executive Officer and Chairman, a Vice President and nine Trustees. CNJ Mensa had become so large that the evolution of formal government was inevitable.

As CNJM our first president was Don Smart in 1986, followed by Bill Watko in 1987, Allan Marain in 1992, Margaret Scherbina in 1994, Uncle Frank Zollner in 1996, John Devoti in 1998, Pat McDonnell in 2000, and Paul McKeon in 2002.

Of course, there were so many elected and appointed officers of our local group who made many valuable contributions throughout the years that space does not permit us to recognize them all here. Our group has always maintained a strong bond with the national organization and many of our local officers and members have served the national organization in various elected and appointed capacities.

Since 1966 our local group has never faltered for lack of capable leadership and enthusiastic participation.

## Our Newsletter

We call our local group's newsletter *Forvm*, which we pronounce **For**-vum. Perhaps the creators of this name misspelled the word **forum** by replacing the "u" with a "v." If that happened, then obviously some smart aleck compounded the error with the now-accepted pronunciation. Or maybe the coiners thought that they were copying an ancient Roman practice for the shape of the letter "u."

Our newsletter is the main communication link to chapter activities. Every issue includes: an Events Calendar, a description of the next Monthly Gathering program, a birthday list, and interesting columns on various topics.

Most of the content of *Forvm* is of local origin. Our editorial policy favors local authors and members before non-members. That is to say: if you are a local member and you submit content for possible publication; you may very well see it published. If you want the gratification of seeing your work in print, submit it. If you have some point to promulgate, write a letter, write an article, write a poem, or create a picture and submit it. If you wish to educate our local membership about something, ... if you wish to entertain our local membership in some way, ... if you have an idea for a submission but are not sure what the editor will think of it, well then, contact the editor and talk it over. Many a discussion with the editor has resulted in published work. If you have no idea for a submission, but can write or draw (most of us can either write or draw; some can do both) contact the editor and ask what he or she may want submitted. Remember, the editor should not write the entire *Forvm*; mostly they should just edit and publish other members' submissions.

If you can, submit material to the editor by email to: [editor@cnj.us.mensa.org](mailto:editor@cnj.us.mensa.org). CNJM invites you to make *Forvm* yours by contributing to it.

# What is Collating?

Every month our Events Calendar lists a “Collating Party.” Now then, why would any intelligent person expend their valuable free time working? I ask this because, on the surface, preparing the *Forvm* for mailing sounds like work.

Let me explain the process. By the date of the collating party the Editor has already prepared the next issue of the *Forvm* for publication, and had hundreds of already collated copies printed. The Circulation Manager has divided the labels into groups. The printed newsletters and the labels get delivered to the collating site, along with USPS trays with covers, little wafer seals, strapping tape, and miscellaneous other stuff. At the end of the evening the foregoing become trays of folded, sealed, and labeled, *Forvms* (*Forva*?) ready for delivery to the post office.

So why is this apparent work really fun? Two reasons come to mind right away. Nearly everyone there (sometimes everyone there) is one of your fellow Mensans, which means that you will enjoy the conversation even if you mostly just listen; and the “work” is of a low intellectual level. If you will follow the simple instructions, you almost needn’t think at all. We’ve been doing this for a long time, we have it figured out. Doing mindless work is such a contrast to the work most of us do (or did) for a living that it really is fun. Also, so many members get their newsletter by email, the business part of the evening is usually over in an hour or two.

At collating, a shy or reluctant-to-socialize member can interact with their Mensa peers without having to actually say anything. All you need do is quietly fold or label *Forvms* while munching on snacks and enjoying the conversation. No one will chide you if you work slowly. If you’ve never attended a Mensa party before, you will feel welcomed and among friends. You will discover the truth to the claim that Mensa contains the friends that you haven’t met yet.

Additional fun occurs when the actual collating part of the evening is combined with a barbecue, pizza, potluck or other dining, often followed by games playing. These don’t happen every month, but they do happen more often than not.

Since the *Forvm* comes from the printer already collated, why do we call this event “collating?” In the distant past we actually had to collate the pages that came from the printer, but no more. The process has changed but we never changed the name of the event.

The collating party moves around. By moving this event around we bring the party to every precinct of our area. This makes it occasionally geographically convenient for nearly every member. You can host collating if your home fulfills these basic qualifications: you have sufficient parking space, and you have table space for ten or so attendees to sit around and fold, seal, and label *Forvms*. You should host collating because hosting this party shortens your commute to it and you will get to see your name in the calendar. The host supplies ice cubes, napkins, glasses for the beverages, and plates in case anyone brings food that needs plates (like pie or ice cream). The guests bring snacks and beverages.

You should come to collating because you will have fun there, you will meet some really neat people, you get an early chance to find errors/typos in the *Forvm*, and you get to take the next month’s *Forvm* home with you while others are waiting for their copy to arrive.

# Snowball

Snowball is the Regional Gathering (RG) of Central New Jersey Mensa (CNJM). You are wondering what is an RG? American Mensa notes that an “RG is actually the annual or biannual gathering of a single host group or team of groups. These events usually take place over a weekend and can attract Mensans from all over the country. While some long-established RGs draw hundreds of attendees, most are much smaller. However, each RG usually features speakers; games; a Hospitality room with food, beverages and lots of socializing; and often a little something special, a signature program or activity that the host group injects into the event to make it their own. Approximately 40 RGs are held every year, and all are fully planned and staffed by local volunteers.” Now let’s be real. It is a three-day party, and we know how to party.

Snowball began during the era of disco in the mid-1970s. A small group of Mensans decided to rent rooms in an upstate New York hotel in the middle of winter and have a three-day party. At the time, the RG was small, attracting only about 20-30 people each year, probably because it was held in the middle of winter. After a few years, the organizers decided to move Snowball to New Jersey, since it was run by New Jerseyans, and have it during the first week of March. Snowball has been held every year since that time and has steadily grown until, today; we plan on 250-300 Mensans attending from all areas of the United States with a third to half of the states represented. It is the longest continuously running RG in American Mensa and we have developed one of the best reputations for hospitality, speakers, and all-around fun.

Our hospitality usually includes hoagies on Friday night and pizza lunch on Saturday. We also make sure there are a very wide variety of choices for breakfast each day. We fill the hospitality suite with plenty of snacks, both healthy and fattening, to satisfy any craving. Drinks include water, juice, soda, ice tea, with beer and wine available. Nighttime make-your-own ice cream sundaes or pie à la mode happen both Friday and Saturday night. On Saturday night we have a dance party and then late night chocolate fondue served with champagne. If you do not find enough to eat at Snowball, you just are not trying.

Our speakers have conversed on almost any subject you can imagine. We have had speakers on politics, astronomy, investment, art, travel, nature, pornography, the mathematics of love, and film. We have had workshops including Tai Chi, painting, juggling, massage, and other activities. A Sudoku tournament, chess, bridge, a treasure hunt, karaoke and a well-stocked game room add to the fun. Sunday includes a multi-media swap where you bring in any entertainment, old or new, (books, CD's puzzles, games, etc.) and swap for something else. We only ask that the items be usable.

Ask to join our Facebook Snowball group and read about past Snowballs and feedback from attendees. Our 50<sup>th</sup> Snowball will take place in 2024. So, come join us at Snowball for a great party. There is a registration form online through the CNJM webpage and often in the *Forum* with reasonable registration rates. If you want to help or have some ideas on how to improve Snowball, please chime in by contacting the current Snowball chair. We are always looking for speakers; help in hospitality and at the registration desk. So come on over and see what all the fuss is about.

## Acknowledgments

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As of the publication of this handbook, CNJM members reside in these 189 New Jersey towns and cities:

Aberdeen	Fieldsboro	Manville	Ringoes
Allenhurst	Flemington	Marlboro	Robbinsville
Allentown	Florence	Martinsville	Roebling
Annandale	Fords	Massapequa Park	Roselle
Asbury	Forked River	Matawan	Roselle Park
Asbury Park	Fort Lauderdale	Metuchen	Rumson
Atlantic Highlands	Franklin Park	Middlesex	Sayreville
Avenel	Freehold	Middletown	Scotch Plains
Basking Ridge	Frenchtown	Milford	Seaside Heights
Bayville	Gillette	Millstone Township	Sewaren
Bedminster	Gladstone	Milltown	Short Hills
Belle Mead	Glen Gardner	Monmouth Beach	Shrewsbury
Belmar	Green Brook	Monmouth Junction	Skillman
Berkeley Heights	Hamilton	Monroe	Somerset
Bernardsville	Hamilton Square	Monroe Township	Somerville
Bordentown	Hampton	Montclair	South Amboy
Bound Brook	Helmetta	Morganville	South Bound Brook
Branchburg	High Bridge	Mountainside	South Orange
Brick	Highland Park	Neptune	South Plainfield
Bridgewater	Highlands	Neptune City	Spotswood
Brielle	Hightstown	Neshanic Station	Spring Lake
Califon	Hillsborough	New Brunswick	Springfield
Carteret	Holmdel	New Providence	Stewartsville
Chesterfield	Hopewell	North Brunswick	Stirling
Clark	Howell	North Plainfield	Stockton
Clarksburg	Iselin	Oakhurst	Summit
Cliffwood	Jackson	Ocean	Three Bridges
Clinton	Jamesburg	Old Bridge	Tinton Falls
Collingswood	Keansburg	Oldwick	Titusville
Colonia	Kendall Park	Parlin	Toms River
Colts Neck	Keyport	Pennington	Trenton
Cranbury	Lakewood	Perrineville	Union
Cranford	Lambertville	Perth Amboy	Union Beach
Cream Ridge	Landing	Pine Beach	Wall
Dayton	Lanoka Harbor	Piscataway	Wall Township
Dunellen	Lawrenceville	Pittstown	Waretown
East Brunswick	Lebanon	Plainfield	Warren
East Orange	Leonardo	Plainsboro	Watchung
East Windsor	Lincroft	Point Pleasant Beach	West Long Branch
Eatontown	Linden	Point Pleasant Boro	West Windsor
Edgewater	Little Silver	Port Monmouth	Westfield
Edison	Long Branch	Port Reading	Whitehouse Station
Elizabeth	Long Valley	Princeton	Whiting
Englishtown	Manahawkin	Princeton Junction	Woodbridge
Ewing	Manalapan	Rahway	Wrightstown.
Fair Haven	Manasquan	Raritan	
Fanwood	Manchester	Readington	
Farmingdale	Mantoloking	Red Bank	