



January 2014 RVC Column
by RVC Greg Kontz

Hi guys—

It's January. I'm in North Dakota—and it's 40 degrees! Just got done chopping ice on my north-facing driveway. I know it's gonna get cold again, but last weekend I saw my neighbor washing his car when it was 40 degrees. You can almost see some light at the end of the tunnel—at least that's what I'm telling myself. We've already had our 3 weeks or so of below zero—maybe spring comes early this year. That would be nice.

We're having an RG in Dickinson this year—June 13-14-15. We had a very successful one in Fargo last year. Since I agreed to have it in Dickinson (my home town) this year, I'm sorta the one putting it together. The motel is set up, as are meals. There's going to be an oilfield tour—got that pretty well scoped out. The speakers and other activities will soon be decided upon and set up.

I'm having trouble with just “getting it done”. I've got some ideas, and think they're good ones, but getting the phone calls, visits, and commitments made seems to be more difficult than I thought it would be. I also find myself getting ‘stuck’—arguing with myself about what is the better way to go. I usually am able to “make things happen” in my professional life, it's kinda what I do every day. But, in the volunteer world of Mensa, I find that it doesn't seem to work as well sometimes. I suspect that some of you out there have similar challenges when you're trying to “make something happen” in a volunteer organization—whether it's Mensa, a non-profit, a social organization, or any other group where it's a volunteer bunch that does the implementation phase of making something happen.

In my frequent conversations with myself, (you guys do that too—right?) I've been rather critical of myself lately. I don't handle the criticism very well sometimes. I even quit talking to myself a couple of times, but then absolutely nothing gets done. So I tried to think back to the things that did work out alright -- what was the difference? The answer did not take long to uncover: The things that worked out well were the ones where I asked for, and received, help and advice from other people. It was really that simple. Ask for, and accept gratefully, help from other people. It's better to have some diversity in your ideas, and in your implementation of them.

Starting tomorrow, I plan to do exactly that. I've got some fellow Mensans close by that I plan to personally ask for some input and help. I've also got some that I communicate with every once in a while—they'll be contacted also. I think that it will be a lot better once I do that. I'll let you guys know how it goes—either way.

I hear about similar problems from other people who are Mensans, want to make something happen, and are frustrated. Maybe you want to start a new fundraiser, a new group activity, get the group more active, or bring in new members. You're disappointed in what you've got for results so far. Just does not seem to be happening as soon, or as well, as you think it should. Maybe the thing that's missing is that you're trying to do too much by yourself. Maybe one thing that will help is some concentration on getting others ‘on board’ with the idea, and then asking for (and allowing) some help from them. It takes some setting aside of your ego maybe, also some ability to handle rejection (yes, some people will refuse)—but it's worth it. It's also the best way to make whatever you're trying to do sustainable. You get hit by a truck—it still gets done.

In the spirit of what I've just stated, I'd like to reach out—ask you for some input as to what you have for ideas

regarding speakers and activities for the June RG in Dickinson. Doesn't have to be anything real lengthy or detailed—just shoot me an email that has an idea or suggestion. Tell me about something that worked well for you. Tell me about something that didn't. I look forward to hearing from you.

On another note: Warren Walker's passing left a vacancy in the Region 7 Scholarship Chair position. I'm pleased to announce that Sean McCormick from Plains and Peaks Mensa has agreed to take on that duty. Thanks, Sean—and congratulations!

Later,

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