

## Publisher's Foreword

Here you have the latest edition of American Mensa's most popular handbook. It is the product of countless hours of experience on the part of Mensa's most visibly active volunteer work force—its newsletter editors. Handbook editor Meredy Amyx is to be congratulated for performing a truly impressive task in organizing existing materials from many sources and adding a wealth of current advice and information. Her professional approach and conscientious efforts have resulted in this very comprehensive manual. The greenest of newcomers can find here enough information to carry out a creditable editorial performance from the outset; a seasoned editor might study the contents to ensure that his or her store of knowhow includes all the information available to the newcomer.

Should you discover a lack of information or a bit of outdated material, you'll have performed the first step in the revision process so vital in shaping a guidebook like this. Just make your questions or suggestions known to the Publications Officer or the national office. Your immediate concerns may thus be resolved and your ideas considered for inclusion in looseleaf supplements or revised editions.

Happy reading . . . and happy editing. May you find continuing success and pleasure in your special work for Mensa.

Susan Wantland  
*Publications Officer*  
*American Mensa Committee*

October 1, 1982



# Acknowledgments

There isn't a soul who knows all there is to know about issuing publications for Mensa. Each of us relies at least a little bit upon others for information, ideas, moral support, and, at times, guidance. And many of us are dependent upon others for help with the sheer donkey work our jobs entail.

This handbook is the work of many people. I acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of every editor who submitted material.

Others whose names may not be prominent within the pages merit appreciation: Norman Pos, whose first edition has been a valuable resource to me over the years and formed a sound foundation for this version; Clotilde Clark, who began the work on the present edition and secured significant contributions for it; and Susan Wantland, executive publisher, who has been unfailingly supportive and who endured with angelic patience the long gestation period.

Very special thanks belong to my husband Dick Amyx, who supplied conscientious critiques, meticulous proofreading, and wise counsel throughout the term of this project.

Meredy Amyx  
*Editor*



# Introduction

The task of editing is a decision-making process from start to finish. It is not the function of the *Editor's Handbook* to tell you what your decisions ought to be. Rather, its purpose is to help you discover the decisions that are yours to make and to recommend factors for you to weigh in making them.

This book is structured in three parts. Part I, "The Basics," is concerned mainly with defining the task. Chapter 1 spells out the musts of your Mensa editorship—the absolutes. Chapter 2 is addressed to the novice editor; if you are new to the game, don't skip that chapter. Even old hands, however, may benefit from a review of some of the particulars.

The emphasis in Part II, "The Publication," is on "how to." Chapters 3 through 5 proceed logically through the steps of producing the newsletter, with portions graduated for the beginner and the more experienced editor. Chapters 6 and 7 take up the business aspects. Chapter 8 treats some of the special concerns of SIG editors.

While Part III—"The Editor"—deals more in abstracts than in the concrete matters of Part II, it is no less practical. There are many facets of your job that do not involve blue pencils and rubber cement. Some of them do not even relate to your editorship per se. The aim of this section is to help you keep your balance in a responsible, prominent, challenging, and sometimes difficult role.

At the back of the book you will find an index. In lieu of a glossary, the index includes references to definitions as they occur in text.

A significant proportion of this book is derived from the edition of the *Editor's Handbook* published in 1975 under the editorship of Norman Pos. It has been revised, condensed, and rearranged. The remaining material is new, much of it gathered by Clotilde Clark expressly for this edition.

I have not attempted here to differentiate between new material and old or to note which reprinted selections have been edited for this version, since that information would consume considerable space without adding to the utility of the manual. Likewise, I see no special value in distinguishing current editors from former editors or in making constant reference to their associated publications; these details are irrelevant to the value of their remarks. Publications' names appear as they did when the material was written. Writers' names, however, have been brought up to date in those instances where I happen to know of changes. Oversights in this respect signify nothing other than my ignorance or forgetfulness; corrections are

invited. All requests for anonymity have, of course, been honored. Writers whose contributions were unattributed in the earlier edition remain unidentified in this one.

A special note on the use of personal pronouns in this manual: in matters of grammar and usage, I am a traditionalist. Among several symptoms of this condition is my use of the masculine pronouns in their generic or universal sense. If you are of another persuasion, please read “he or she,” “him or her,” and so forth, as appropriate. Other writers’ usages herein have generally been left as written.

Please look upon this handbook not only as the product of the experience of many Mensa editors but as a work in progress, subject to ongoing revision. As with every other M publication, its audience is also its author. If you face problems not discussed, if you have other solutions to share, or if you simply delight in nit-picking—a virtue, after all, in an editor—your comments will be welcome. Future editions will be the stronger for your contributions.

Ten years of experience in editing various Mensa publications have left me with one overriding conviction: everybody needs an editor—including the editor. With that I usher you into the text.