

The Kids' Table  
AG Prep  
by  
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This time last year the Phoenix Gen X group was busy as bees preparing for the 2002 Mensa Annual Gathering in Scottsdale. For most of us, it was our virgin visit to this world of wall-to-wall Mensans. The reason was simple: it's hard to ignore a party in your own backyard. For some, it was just another weekend. But for several others, our world was rocked. Good, bad or indifferent, the Gen X presence at the AG made an impact. We were seen as a success story. Through the magic of e-mail, we've kept in contact with other Gen Xers and have attended their RGs as well. This year several of us are making the trek to St. Paul. This is a public service announcement for Mensans new to the AG universe.

#### Step One: Preparation

Mind, body and soul need to be readied for a four-day assault.

Look your best--if possible, avoid food for at least two weeks prior to the event. Then your body will have a greater appreciation for the free chocolate. My favorite meal in the hospitality room last year was a plate filled with Hershey's kisses, Fritos and broccoli. (Never say no to green vegetables.) While others may wish to improve their tolerance for box wine and other potent potables, that is not something this writer can support.

#### The Costume Contest

The theme of last year's costume contest was royalty. Members of the Society for Creative Anachronism had an unfair advantage. They can pull off Henry VIII or one of his wives at the drop of a codpiece. This year the theme is Looney Tunes. With this theme, we're all on equal footing. While I don't recall Jack in the Box being a member of the Looney Tunes gang, I know the hamburger spokesperson may just show up in a hunting cap in an effort to pass for Elmer Fudd. Do yourself a favor and plan ahead. My Tweety Bird costume is in the hands of a rather confused SCA seamstress.

## The Hotel

Your reservations at the AG hotel should have already been made. Late planners will be housed at the Radisson down the block. If you are sharing a room with a spouse or significant other, good for you. While one local Mensan suggested that taking a significant other to the AG is like taking sand to the beach, that seems harsh. This comes from an old AG expression that has been passed down through the ages: if you can't find your Mr./Ms. Right, or Mr./Ms. Right Now at the gathering, you are simply not capable of finding a mate. Make sure you at least know your room mate's or "new friend's" first name. To make this easier for some of us, the Geek Badge will have it printed in **BOLD LETTERS**. Don't make the mistake of calling your "new friend" by the smaller letters on the badge--that's the city he or she calls home. Though it may be possible, not too many people are named Hamtramck, Michigan.

## Step Two: AG Etiquette

### The Geek Badge

You must wear your name badge at all times. Over the years, a rigid schema of identifiers were developed to make your personal preferences known. Last year, I tried to get away with just two stickers. The Blue Sticker indicated that I was single. The Red Sticker meant that no one was allowed to touch me--not a hug, not a handshake, not a thigh grab. My friends insisted more stickers be added. Soon the stickers on my badge were sending out contradictory messages. By the end of the AG, I had been picked up, spun around, hugged, and groped, all in a public setting. Ask first. Don't terrorize the huggee.

### The Schedule

There are so many events, it's hard to choose just one. Those with a PDA can plan their day accordingly. Others may wish to pop in and out of a lecture. Don't sit in the front row if you aren't willing to commit to the topic at hand. And check for signs of a room change. Last year's talk on First Dates switched rooms with the talk on Tantric Sex. One person commented that the slide show she watched didn't seem to relate to any of the first dates she'd been on.

### The Games

Competitiveness and geekiness sometimes go hand in hand. Beware of the Game Nazis. And don't walk into a brouhaha during the championship round of a game. Mature adults should know how to make nice. On a related note, beware of pouters. Games are meant to be fun and relaxing. Even the best player will lose occasionally.

## Mind your manners

There is no such thing as a sound-proofed hotel room. For that matter, there is no such thing as a magic blender, an appliance capable of silently chopping ice at 2:00 am. People make noise. Blenders make noise. Radios and TVs make noise. This is why I'm hoping my room is far away from all my friends.

Helpfulness and friendliness are the hallmarks of the Gen X group. If you have any further questions, just go to the hot tub and ask for Tony. He'll be waiting for you. Gen X, often.