

# BLAST!

## NNJ Mensa 2026 Regional Gathering

### Registration / Stickers

Our registration table is by the hotel check-in counter: you cannot miss it!

You will be greeted by our wonderful registrars and supporting volunteers. Registration will open at 3 PM on Friday.

You will get your badge, this program, along with a mini-program that you can fold behind your badge. We will supply colored dots to put on your badge. We have several huggers in the group and you may let them know how receptive you are by wearing the following:

- **Green – I love to hug**
- **Yellow – I like to hug but ask first**
- **Red – No hugging**
- **Blue – Single & open to possibilities**

Please treat all children as if they have red dots, as they often decorate their badges with multiple colors or their favorite.

**Your badge must be visible at all times during BLAST!**

**Please visit our webpage:**

[nnjmensa.org/blast](http://nnjmensa.org/blast)



### Chairman Welcome

Once more we're excited to welcome one and all to another Blast! Regional Gathering. This marks our fourth annual RG, and we thank you for starting the year off with us. BLAST!, as the name suggests, is about propelling yourself forward as you begin the new year. Hopefully, this RG will provide the necessary impetus to inspire you to achieve some of your goals for the year, help you to build new relationships (or strengthen existing ones), and embrace the Mensa brand, that is reinforce the fact that you're a 2%er (IQ-wise of course).

An RG like this could not have been possible without the tireless and energetic support of our presenters and volunteers. The presenters have lent their professional expertise, passions, and life experiences to enrich our collective lives. Our volunteers have been selfless in giving of their time to make this BLAST! RG a great experience for all. As you interact with those presenters and volunteers, please offer them your sincerest gratitude for their sacrifices. They, like all of us, embody the best of Mensa. We hope that you have a blast at BLAST!

**Keith Thompson**  
BLAST! Regional Gathering Chair

## Hospitality

Our Hospitality and Games room is located in **Conference Room A**. We will do our best to leave it open as much as possible.

We will open it at 5 PM on Friday, until Sunday at noon.

We will have snacks, fruits, and beverages of all kinds, and we will do our best to replenish.

### Games

Please be gentle with the games. Treat them like they belong to someone you know (since they probably do). Use of the games and tables is first come, first served. There will be one table reserved for jigsaw puzzles. Please use only this table for jigsaw puzzles. When you are done with a game, please put it back carefully, ready for the next players.

### Speakers

We are very grateful that some members have decided to share their knowledge to inform and possibly even entertain the rest of us. Please treat them all with respect and don't hesitate to express your gratitude if you feel like it.

### Thank our volunteers!

Events like these are not possible without the generous support of our tireless volunteers!

## Code of Conduct

We aim at having a great event together. Respecting this Code of Conduct will help. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Our contract with the hotel requires us to enforce certain regulations and codes of conduct while at BLAST!, so we ask that you observe these few rules:

1. Please wear your badge at all times with no exceptions. Please note that kids' badges will be a different color than adult badges. Anyone who is not wearing a BLAST! name-tag won't be allowed in our hospitality or program rooms. This is a security issue. Please be kind and cooperate.
2. Do not engage in the use of any illegal substances (or violate any other laws) on the premises. The beer and wine are only for registrants who are at least 21 years old.
3. If you have brought children with you to BLAST! we remind you that their welfare, safety, and behavior are your responsibility. Please don't leave your young people unaccompanied and do control them so they are not a disturbance to the other BLAST! guests. Also, a few events may be noted as "adults only" and we must enforce that rule.
4. The games in our game room belong to someone. Please don't take any out of the room, even for a little while, and be as cautious as if it was yours.
5. No smoking or vaping is permitted anywhere in the hotel. This includes any form of tobacco and tobacco-less e-cigarettes.
6. Any direction regarding food safety must be followed.
7. Each member is a representative of Mensa. Your conduct reflects on our group. Anyone causing a problem at BLAST! with the hotel or another member will be asked to leave the gathering without refund and not welcomed back. The hospitality committee is working hard to keep the hospitality suite stocked with food and beverages. Please clean up after yourself by tossing your paper plates, cups, etc. in the trash.
8. Harassment: BLAST! is a friendly and safe environment for our attendees. Unwelcome physical contact and other forms of harassment will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with this policy may result in removal from the event without a refund, and police intervention if warranted. If you have concerns or need to report misconduct, find a member of the organization (see left). If you need immediate and direct intervention for your personal safety, request assistance from security at the front desk.

### BLAST Staff

RG Chair: Keith Thompson

Program Guide Editor: Laurie Thomas

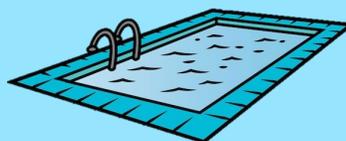
Testing Coordinator: Richard Schaefer

Treasurer: Melissa Starr

NNJ MENSAs Chair: Greg Hoffman

**Pool Rules:** Please respect the regular pool rules as displayed at the hotel.

During our Mensa private time at the pool (7–9 AM and 9–11 PM), please do not bring any alcohol, glass, food, or drinks. Thank you!



# Build Mensa by Building Your Chapter

Northern New Jersey Mensa has won a Diamond Award each of the past four years. We appreciate the recognition, but we want all Mensa chapters to perform at the highest level. So we freely share our playbook!

American Mensa’s Local Group Jewel Awards recognize good performance by local groups. Local groups earn points by doing tasks (e.g., submitting financial reports) on time and by doing things that benefit the membership (e.g., publishing a newsletter and holding a regional gathering). The achievement levels, from lowest to highest, are Emerald, Sapphire, Ruby, and Diamond. The Diamond Award is given to the top-performing local group in its size class. For the past four years, Northern New Jersey Mensa won the Diamond for Class II.

Our success was no accident. In 2020, Northern New Jersey Mensa was

practically dormant. Then, Franck Mounier became Local Secretary (LocSec), upon the death of his predecessor. His first act as LocSec was to recruit Kimberly Strickland to form an executive committee. They based their strategic plan on the Jewel Award point system. Their goal was to win the Diamond, which the chapter did in 2021-2022. Under their guidance, the chapter won two more Diamonds. After Franck and Kimberly joined the AMC, we won our fourth Diamond.

Along with holding picnics and BLAST! regional gatherings, we started our IGNYTE! RG just for Young Mensans. Richard Schaefer has consistently held monthly testing sessions and was named Testing Coordinator of the Year in 2025.

To help other chapters in American Mensa thrive, articles about our strategic plan and our Jewel Award success

ran in the Mensa Bulletin.

Northern New Jersey Mensa has made its mark within American Mensa. Now, we are planning to make a difference in our communities. At 9 AM on Saturday, Young Mensan Tanvi Gopalan will talk about her quantum computing advocacy. At 10:30 AM on Saturday, Young Mensan Rohan Raghu will talk about his [Numeraldo](#) foundation, to help people learn math. At 7:30 PM on Saturday Laurie Endicott Thomas will talk about how Northern New Jersey Mensa can help struggling school districts succeed in teaching reading. To revive the humanities, NNJM and Mensa in Georgia have a Great Books and World Classics discussion group, which meets by Zoom on Saturdays. For these and other events, visit our calendar:

[www.nnjmensa.org/events](http://www.nnjmensa.org/events)

## BLAST! Schedule

	Conf. Room A	Boardroom B	Boardroom C	Breakfast Room	Business center	Pool	Lobby
<b>Friday</b>							
3–3:30 PM							
3:30–4 PM							
4–4:30 PM							
4:30 – 5 PM							
5 – 5:30 PM	<b>Games &amp; Hospitality</b>	<b>NNJ French Conversation Group</b> K. Stein-Smith				<b>Pool Open to All Hotel Guests</b>	<b>REGISTRATION Lobby</b>
5:30 – 6 PM							
6 – 6:30 PM					<b>Dinner</b>		
6:30 – 7 PM							
7 – 7:30 PM							
7:30 – 8 PM							
8 – 8:30 PM					<b>Happy Hour Humorous Hats</b>		
8:30 – 9 PM		<b>Punctilious Punctuation</b> Ian Randal Strock	<b>Cybersecurity &amp; AI</b> Jennifer Mazzanti				
9 – 9:30 PM							
9:30 – 10 PM					<b>Wine Tasting</b> Jim Poserina	<b>Private Pool (BLAST! only)</b>	
10 – 10:30 PM							
10:30 – 11 PM							
11 – 11:30 PM							
11:30 to 12		<b>MOVIE</b>  <b>Idiocracy</b>					

	Conf. room A	Boardroom B	Boardroom C	Breakfast Room	Business center	Pool	Lobby	
<b>Saturday</b>								
7 - 7:30 AM	<b>Games and hospitality</b>			<b>Breakfast</b>		<b>Private Pool (BLAST! Only)</b>	<b>REGISTRATION Lobby</b>	
7:30 - 8 AM								
8 - 8:30 AM								
8:30 - 9 AM								
9 - 9:30 AM			<b>Chair Yoga</b> Laurie Thomas	<b>Quantum Computing</b> Tanvi Gopalan		<b>Proctor prep</b>		<b>Pool Open to All Hotel Guests</b>
9:30 - 10 AM								
10 - 10:30 AM						<b>TESTING</b>  Richard Schaeffer		
10:30 - 11 AM								
11 - 11:30 AM			<b>Numeracy and Numeraldo</b> Rohan Raghu	<b>Calculating Your Retirement Number</b> Keith Thompson				
11:30 - NOON								
12 - 12:30 PM					<b>Lunch</b>			
12:30 - 1 PM								
1 - 1:30 PM								
1:30 - 2 PM								
2 - 2:30 PM			<b>Legal Negotiations</b> William Wallis IV	<b>Meet the AMC and RVCs</b>				
2:30 - 3 PM								
3 - 3:30 PM						<b>Poker Tournament Starts</b>		
3:30 - 4 PM			<b>Personal/ Professional Development</b> Keith Thompson	<b>Mensa Dance Lessons</b> Don Jacobs				
4 - 4:30 PM								
4:30 - 5 PM								
5 - 5:30 PM			<b>US Supreme Court in 2025</b> Gregory Hoffman	<b>Neurodiverse World</b> Jenny Liu				
5:30 - 6 PM								
6 - 6:30 PM					<b>Group Picture!</b>			
6:30 - 7 PM						<b>Dinner</b>		
7 - 7:30 PM								
7:30 - 8 PM					<b>Double-Deck Hearts Tournament</b>			
8 - 8:30 PM		<b>Mensa Literacy Initiative</b> Laurie Thomas	<b>Ask the Gemologist</b> Joseph Haber					
8:30 - 9 PM								
9 - 9:30 PM				<b>Whiskey Tasting</b> Erin & Rob Madeira	<b>Poker Game (optional)</b>	<b>Private Pool Hot Tub (BLAST! Only)</b>		
9:30 - 10 PM								
10 - 10:30 PM		<b>Two Rooms and a Boom</b> Cassie Morphy						
10:30 - 11 PM								
11 - 11:30 PM								
11:30 PM to 12								

	Conf. room A	Boardroom B	Boardroom C	Breakfast Room	Business center	Pool	Lobby
<b>Sunday</b>							
7 –7:30 AM	<b>Games &amp; hospitality</b>			<b>Breakfast</b>		<b>Private Pool (BLAST! Only)</b>	
7:30 – 8 AM							
8 – 8:30 AM							
8:30 – 9 AM							
9 – 9:30 AM			<b>Meet the NNJM Leadership</b>				
9:30 – 10 AM							
10 – 10:30 AM			<b>Leadership Development Workshop</b> Greg, Laurie & ExComm				
10:30 – 11 AM							
11 – 11:30 AM							
11:30 AM – noon	<b>BLAST! Byebyes, Closing, &amp; Awards</b>						
12 – 12:30 PM							
12:30 – 1 PM	<b>Goodbyes - Lunch/sandwiches/leftovers</b>						

**Meals**

**All meals are included in your registration package and are in the breakfast room**

**Friday Dinner: 6 – 7:30 PM**

A selection of pizzas and salads including:

- Cheese pizza (vegetarian)
- Veggie pizza (vegetarian)
- Margherita pizza (vegetarian)
- White mozzarella & ricotta pizza (vegetarian)
- Meat lovers pizza
- Buffalo chicken
- Pepperoni pizza
- Caesar salad .... and more

Accompanied by beer, wine, and soft drinks



**Saturday Breakfast: 7 – 10 AM**

Self-service buffet at the hotel: Hot coffee, tea, Belgian waffles, breakfast meats and proteins, assorted yogurts

**Saturday Lunch: 12 noon – 1:30 PM**

Pre-packaged sandwiches featuring: ham, turkey, chicken, and vegetarian options; tossed salad ; assorted fruit; snack bags. Accompanied by beer, wine, and soft drinks

**Saturday Dinner: 6 – 7 PM**

Buffet of Italian Food from a local Ironbound restaurant. Additional details available later.

**sunday Breakfast: 7 – 10 AM**

Self-service buffet at the hotel: hot coffee, tea, Belgian waffles, breakfast meats and proteins, assorted yogurts

**Sunday Lunch: 12 noon – 1 PM**

Assorted pre-packaged sandwiches and leftovers from all of the terrific meals we’ve had throughout the weekend

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## Program Content

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### Friday, January 23, 2026

**Registration Desk — Opens at 3 PM, Lobby**

**Games and Hospitality — 5 PM to midnight, Conference Room A**

**NNJ French Conversation Group — 5 – 6:30 PM, Boardroom B**

*Kathleen Stein-Smith, PhD*

Come chat with us, en français! All levels of French language ability are welcome. If you would like to maintain or improve your French language skills, please consider joining us on Monday evenings for the weekly NNJ Mensa French conversation group online via Zoom, Mondays at 7 PM. Contact: [kathysteinsmith@gmail.com](mailto:kathysteinsmith@gmail.com).

**Dinner — Breakfast Room, 5:30 – 7:30 PM**

**Happy Hour and Humorous Hats (21+ only) — 7:30 – 9 PM, Breakfast Room**

Come share this wonderful tradition of Northern NJ Mensa. Our bartender will be mixing drinks and serving up laughs. Wear your most humorous headgear (optional but encouraged) and join us for the happiest hour (and change) at BLAST!

**Punctilious Punctuation — 8 – 9:30 PM, Boardroom B**

*Ian Randal Strock*

Hear about those jots and tittles, including why they're called jots and tittles, and the horrifying story of why the period goes inside the quotation marks. Punctuation is necessary, beautiful, evocative, meaningful... and a heck of a lot of fun. You may find yourself agreeing that the "schmutz" on the page really deserves our love.

**Cybersecurity in the age of organized crime hackers who use AI — 8 – 9:30 PM, Boardroom C**

*Jennifer and Carl Mazzanti*

Global organized-crime organizations are increasingly using AI to hack accounts and run various scams. You might benefit from IT expert Jennifer Mazzanti's important insights about cybersecurity for your business and yourself.

**Wine Tasting (21+ only) — 9 – 10:30 PM, Breakfast Room**

*Jim Poserina*

We're going to explore some unique varietals that will become a new favorite or remind you of a wine you already love or re-introduce you to something you tried that one time on that great trip or all of the above.

**Private Pool Party — 9 – 11 PM, Pool**

The pool area will be reserved for BLAST! participants. The pool will be open to other hotel guests from 9 AM to 9 PM.

**Movie (Idiocracy) — 9:30 – 11:30 PM, Boardroom B**

An average man and woman undergo a hibernation experiment and wake up 500 years later. During that 500 years, IQ has decreased dramatically, infrastructure has deteriorated, low comedy and vulgarity have replaced culture, and consumerism rules. This is a comedy, but in places it feels like a documentary!

## Saturday, January 24

**Registration Desk — Opens at 7 AM, Lobby**

**Breakfast — 7 – 10 AM, Breakfast Room**

**Games and Hospitality — 7 AM to midnight, Conference Room A**

**Private Pool Party — 7 – 9 AM, Pool**

**Chair Yoga — 9 – 10:30 AM, Boardroom B**

*Laurie Endicott Thomas*

See how a disabled vet lost over 100 pounds, along with his disability, through an at-home yoga program. Learn about how yoga can help to rebuild your bones and help you remain independent. We will do a DDP Yoga chair yoga workout.

**Introducing Quantum Computing — 9 – 10:30 AM, Boardroom B**

*Tanvi Gopalan*

Tanvi Gopalan is a 12-year-old Young Mensan and a Youth Science Communicator demystifying the world of quantum physics for audiences of all ages.

**Mensa Admission Test — 10 AM to noon, Business Center**

*Richard Schaeffer*

Candidates will be taking the Mensa admission test. Don't disturb! Proctor prep will start at 9:30 AM.

**Numeracy and Numeraldo — 10:30 AM – 12:00 noon, Boardroom B**

*Rohan Raghu*

Young Mensan Rohan Raghu has started the Numeraldo foundation to improve numeracy (the mathematical equivalent to literacy). Learn about how you can support this effort.

**Calculating Your Retirement Number — 10:30 AM to 12 noon, Boardroom C**

*Keith Thompson*

How much will you need to save to comfortably retire? \$1M, or \$2M, or some other multiple of that? When should you start saving? Have you ever heard of the 4% rule in retirement? The 5% rule? When should you start collecting Social Security to maximize its value to you? Will it even be there when you retire, and should that affect your decision when to start collecting from it? What are the five essential questions to answer before you retire? Come and learn answers to all these and more.

**Lunch — 12 noon to 1:30 pm, Breakfast Room**

**Legal Negotiations — 1:30 – 3 PM, Boardroom B**

*William W. Wallis IV, Esq*

Gain an insider's perspective on legal negotiations from an attorney who has represented clients who have been injured in accidents such as motor vehicle accidents, pedestrian knockdowns, and premise cases involving slip and falls.

**Meet the American Mensa Committee — 1:30 – 3 PM, Boardroom C**

*Jon Gruebele and other Members of the AMC*

AMC members attending BLAST! will moderate a discussion about issues facing the organization. We'll be happy to entertain your questions, comments, ideas, complaints, suggestions, challenges, and whatever else you'd like to address. The discussion is always interesting — please join us!

*Continued on page 8*

## Saturday, January 24 (cont'd)

### **Masterminding Your Personal and Professional Development — 3 – 4:30 PM, Boardroom B**

*Keith Thompson*

Learn about the four dimensions of success and how they can translate to your personal and professional development.. This workshop will help you: (1) identify then exploit your development curve, (2) develop a strategic plan for long-term success, and (3) compete on a higher dimension. This will be a personal growth session, so come prepared!

### **Dance Lessons for Dance-Impaired Mensans — 3 – 4:30 PM, Boardroom C**

*Don Jacobs*

Oh, that smooth and romantic movement of Fred and Ginger. Well, stop dreaming about it and do something! That's right...YOU. Learn the art of ballroom dancing from Mensa's own guru of dance. Whether it's foxtrot or swing, waltz or tango, you'll be a better dancer by the time you leave and maybe even a smarter one. Ballroom dancing is definitely back, and this class is a must. It also comes with a 30/30 guarantee.

### **Poker Tournament — 3 – 6 PM, Business Center**

*Deb Stone*

Join Deb for a Texas Hold'em tournament (buy-in \$10) and show your poker prowess! Sign-up sheet will be available at the Registration desk (minimum of 6 participants required to hold the tournament)

### **The US Supreme Court in 2025: Key Decisions — 4:30 – 6 PM, Boardroom B**

*Gregory Hoffman, Esq*

Greg will outline how Supreme Court decisions from 2025 can affect you, your family, your business, and your community.

### **Learning, Communicating, and Excelling in a Neurodiverse World — 4:30 – 6 PM, Boardroom C**

*Panelists: Jenny Liu, MBA; Julissa Cadenillas, MSED; Peter Flom, MA, PhD; Jared Kornblatt, MA, MS*

Many high-IQ people learn, think, and communicate differently than most other people because their brains work differently. However, this diversity in how human brains work can lead to social friction. The three panelists will celebrate the valuable contributions that neuroatypical people can make, explore the challenges that neurodiversity poses, and help audience members understand how to bridge the social gaps.

### **Group Picture – Breakfast Room — 6:00 – 6:15 PM**

Immediately before dinner, we'll be taking a group photo in the breakfast room. Don't miss it!

### **Dinner — Breakfast Room, 6:15 – 8 PM**

### **Double-Deck Hearts Tournament — 7 – 9 PM, Business Center**

*Andrea Giarnieri*

### **Northern New Jersey Mensa's Literacy Campaign — 7:30 – 9:30 PM, Boardroom B**

*Laurie Endicott Thomas*

In 2013, Mississippi's grade schools ranked 49th in the nation. But Mississippi has risen to the top 10 by embracing the science of reading. Northern New Jersey Mensa wants to help our underperforming schools achieve similar (or better!) success. Learn about the materials that we are sharing with the public, and how you can take part in our literacy campaign.

### **Ask the Gemologist — 8 – 9:30 PM, Boardroom C**

*Joseph Haber*

Joe will give a brief discussion of "Practical Gemology." He will describe how just three simple and inexpensive instruments (the hand loupe, the dichroscope and the Chelsea Filter) can be used to identify approximately 95% of commonly encountered gems.

*Continued on page 9*

## Saturday, January 24 (cont'd)

### **Whiskey Tasting (21+) — 8:30 – 9:30 PM, Breakfast Room**

*Erin & Rob Madeira*

Whether you are whisk(e)y-curious or you already have a favorite bottle, this tasting is designed to be fun and approachable. We will explore a guided flight featuring a range of whisk(e)y styles, along with simple tips for nosing, tasting, and identifying the flavors you enjoy. Expect a little history, a little nerdy detail for those who want it, and plenty of room for questions. Water and palate-reset options will be available, but bringing a few snacks from hospitality is a smart move. Come ready to compare, contrast, and maybe discover a new favorite pour.

### **Pool Party — 9 – 11 PM, Pool**

The pool and hot tub will be reserved for BLAST! participants from 9 to 11:30 PM. It will be open to all hotel guests from 9 AM to 9 PM.

### **Two Rooms and a Boom — 9:30 – 11:30 PM, Boardroom B**

*Cassie Morphy*

Two Rooms and a Boom is a social deduction game that is explosively fun. Try to blow up the President, or keep him safe, by moving people between rooms. Games run about 20 minutes, and our game leader Cassie will keep things moving quickly, so if you miss the start feel free to come for later games.

### **Poker Game (optional) — 9:30 – 11:30 PM, Business Center**

*Deb Stone*

## Sunday, January 25

### **Pool Party — 7 – 9 AM, Pool**

The pool will be reserved for BLAST! participants from 7 to 9 AM. It will be open to other hotel guests starting at 9 AM.

### **Breakfast — 7 – 10 AM, Breakfast Room**

### **Games and Hospitality — 7 – 11:30 AM, Conference Room A**

### **Meet the Northern New Jersey Mensa Leadership — 9 – 10:30 AM, Boardroom C**

*Greg Hoffman and the Executive Committee*

Meet with our NNJM Leadership Team and look at the 2025 achievements as well as the 2026 plan. See why our chapter has won the Diamond award for Class II every year for the past four years and why we are in a good position to win a fifth consecutive Diamond. This is a perfect time to provide your feedback, explore your potential support to the chapter, or share your ideas.

### **Leadership Development Workshop: Communicate! — 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

*Greg Hoffman and Laurie Endicott Thomas*

Learn how to use a free online graphics program, how to use our social media, and how to create and edit pages, posts, and events on our WordPress website.

### **Goodbyes, Closing, Awards, Lunch, Sandwiches, Leftovers — 12:30 – 1 PM, Conference Room A**

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## Speaker Bios

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**Julissa Cadenillas, MEd**

A Peruvian-American special education teacher, mother, and flamenco dance instructor who enjoys performing.

**Peter Flom, MA, PhD**

A Jewish-American statistician, father, and author of two books about his learning disabilities and being twice exceptional.

**Tanvi Gopalan**

Tanvi Gopalan is a 12-year-old Young Mensan and a Youth Science Communicator demystifying the world of quantum physics for audiences of all ages. Tanvi hosts the podcast "[Quantum Physics for Kids by Subatomic Tanvi](#)", turning complicated ideas into simple, engaging talks. She is also the Ambassador for New York and New Jersey at [Girls in Quantum](#) (an organization devoted to inspiring and empowering girls globally by enabling them on quantum science) and was a featured keynote speaker at the [Q-Volution 2025](#) conference. Tanvi's message is: the amazing world of quantum science is never too big or confusing for any curious mind.

**Jon Grubele**

The Chair of the American Mensa Committee, he previously served as the First and Second Vice Chair and Regional Vice Chair 4. He's a former LocSec, longtime proctor, and a life member. His background is in international marketing and IT.

**Joseph Haber**

A graduate of the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), Joe is the president of Middle Earth Treasures, which sells gems, jewelry, and crystals. Joe has been in the gem and jewelry trade for over 40 years. He is a passionate collector of minerals.

**Greg Hoffman, Esq**

Greg is an associate at Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook & Cooper, PC and a member of the firm's Litigation and Real Estate groups. Besides being LocSec of Northern New Jersey Mensa, he is Borough Council President of Park Ridge, NJ.

**Don Jacobs**

Don has been teaching ballroom dancing for nearly 30 years. He has performed in the grand ballrooms of the Waldorf Astoria, Lincoln Center, and the Rainbow Room. His dancing has been featured on shows on A&E, PBS, QVC, and AMC. He was the dance consultant for her Taylor's music video, Blank Space.

**Jared Kornblatt, MA, MS**

Jared is a communications professional with an extensive background in integrated communications planning, crisis management, and thought leadership across multiple sectors. His graduate education is in English Literature and Communications, with an emphasis on Government and Social Policy, having also attended law school. He's a Proctor-In-Training as part of the Greater New York Mensa chapter and a proud sci-fi junkie. Feel free to write to him: [jfkornblatt@gmail.com](mailto:jfkornblatt@gmail.com).

**Jenny Liu, MBA**

Jenny is a management consultant and has been a registered parliamentarian. She is a caregiver for neurodivergent family members.

**Erin & Rob Madeira**

Erin and Rob Madeira met at a Mensa event in Albany, New York over a decade ago. They enjoy travelling to Mensa events to see friends as well as meet new ones. Rob was recently elected Regional Vice Chair for Region 1.

**Carl and Jennifer Mazzanti**

Carl and Jennifer are life members of Mensa. Carl is President and Jennifer is CEO of eMazzanti Technologies, which provides IT security and risk assessments. Jennifer is also the founder of Mauka Sports Body, a coaching, nutrition, and wellness brand.

*Continued on p. 11*

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## Speaker Bios (cont'd)

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### Jim Poserina

Jim Poserina of Central New Jersey Mensa has been an off-again-on-again home winemaker since 2013. He has previously hosted wine tastings at RGs in New Hampshire, New York, and Virginia. During the week he is the senior application developer for the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

### Rohan Raghu

Rohan has been an invaluable member of Northern New Jersey Mensa for several years, producing our website and newsletter, as well as producing the programs for BLAST! and our IGYNTE! RGs for Young Mensans.

### Richard Schaefer

In 2025, Richard was named American Mensa's Testing Coordinator of the Year. If you want to become a test proctor, contact Richard at [richard@richard-schaefer.com](mailto:richard@richard-schaefer.com).

### Kathleen Stein-Smith, PhD

Dr. Smith is a tireless advocate of language instruction and is active in many language-related associations. The French Republic has named her an *officier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*. She has given a [TEDx talk](#) on the US foreign language deficit, has been interviewed by press and radio, and maintains a blog, "[Language Matters](#)." To join Northern NJ Mensa's French Conversation group (via Zoom, Mondays at 7 PM), contact: [kathysteinsmith@gmail.com](mailto:kathysteinsmith@gmail.com).

### Ian Randal Strock

Ian Randal Strock is the author of *Punctilious Punctuation* (Milherst Publishing, 2025), as well as several books on Presidential history and a slew of short science fiction stories. He's the editor-in-chief and publisher of Fantastic Books and Gray Rabbit Publications. And he's passionate about the proper—and poetic—uses of punctuation.

### Laurie Endicott Thomas

Laurie has worked as an editor in various aspects of medical and academic publishing for many years and is the author of several books on education and health. To get involved in Northern New Jersey's literacy campaign, contact Laurie at [Lthomas521@verizon.net](mailto:Lthomas521@verizon.net).

### Keith Thompson

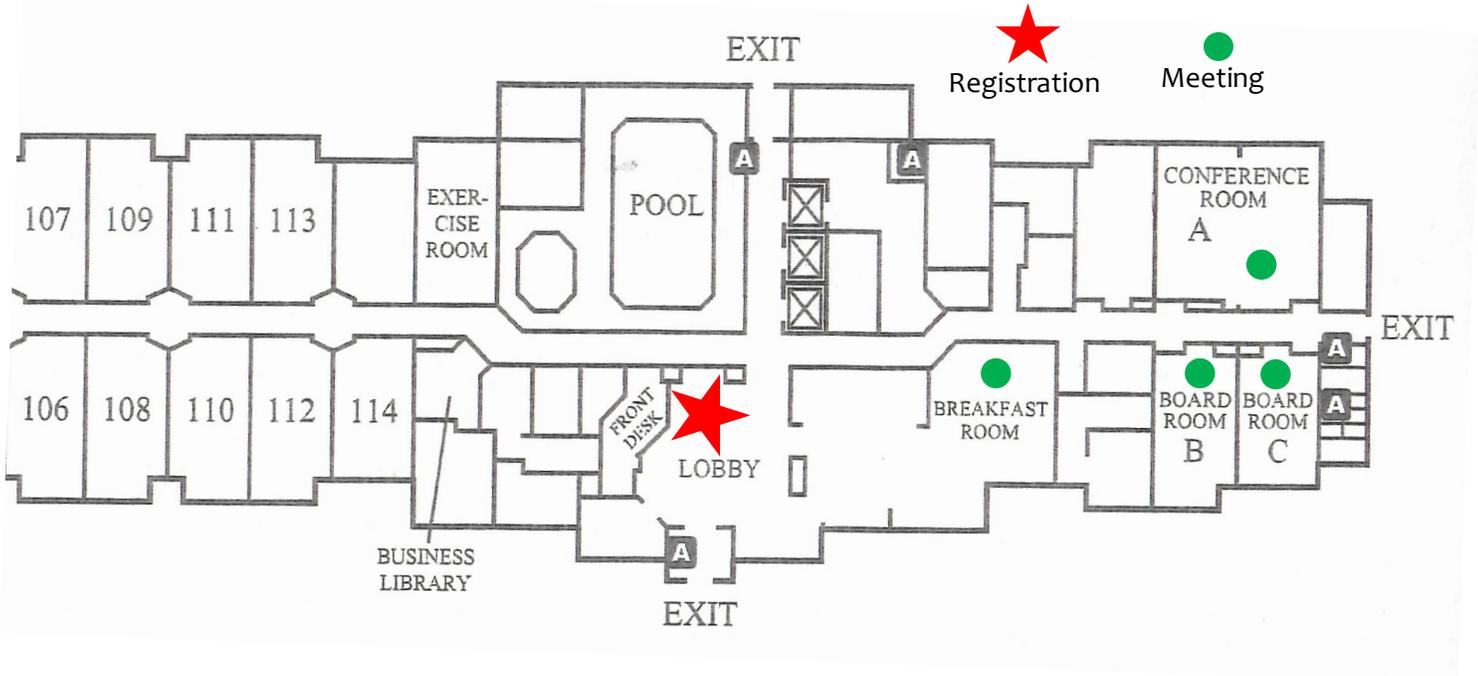
Keith is a senior business development strategist for the global leader in AI and Cloud services and was formerly head of financial planning & analysis (FP&A) for a large multinational air transportation corporation. Among his many accomplishments, he currently manages a hedge fund focused on macro-themed strategic investing. He possesses multiple graduate degrees in economics and finance.

### William W. Wallis IV, Esq

An associate at Sacco & Fillas, William has experience in many aspects of law: employment, criminal defense, and advocacy pursuant to the Child Victims Act. Before practicing law, Will served as chief of staff to a ranking member of the Florida House of Representatives, where he helped to draft important bills and worked to get them passed into law. William is licensed in both New York and New Jersey.

## Hotel Layout

**SpringHill Suites by Marriott Newark Liberty International, 652 US Highway 1 And 9, Newark, NJ 07114**



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