He enjoys hunting and takes occasional duck and goose hunting trips to the Eastern Shore. On a trip to Maine he brought back a black bear cub which he presented to the Baltimore Zoo. The cub was a gift to the Governor from the Maine Game Commission.

He is an avid sports fan and often attends games of the various professional teams in Baltimore. He attended the National Football League Championship Game won by Baltimore in New York in 1958. He went to Cleveland in 1964 where Baltimore lost, and he went to the Super Bowl in Miami in 1969 and was there again in 1971 when the Colts won the World Championship. He was also present in 1970 when the Baltimore Orioles captured the World Series.

The Governor has over 300 pipes in his collection and is seldom seen without one. The Pipe and Tobacco Council of America honored him with its "Pipesmoker of the Year" award as 1969's "national figure who best exemplifies the manly art of pipesmoking."

In 1964 Marvin Mandel was named Man of the Year by his college fraternity Tau Epsilon Phi, and he was named Maryland Veteran of the Year in 1968 by an association of various veterans' groups. He is a member of the Baltimore, Maryland, and American Bar Associations, Omicron Delta Kappa, and he is Past State Chairman of the Jewish War Veterans.

Governor Mandel has been named "Man of the Year" by numerous other organizations. In addition, he is the recipient of the 1969 and 1970 Herbert Lehman Ethics Awards and was named Man of the Year by the 21 Jewel Square Club of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a Masonic organization of that State's most prominent jurists, businessmen, government figures and civic leaders.

His alma mater, the University of Maryland, conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws degree on Governor Mandel at its 1969 commencement exercises. He also received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Towson State College in 1969 and from Washington College in 1971. In June 1971, Governor Mandel received honorary Doctorates from Morgan State College in Baltimore, Yeshiva University in New York, and Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.