

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 13 Number 4

January 2015

Mensa:

Mensa's constitution lists three purposes: to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity; to encourage research into the nature, characteristics, and uses of intelligence; and to provide a stimulating intellectual and social environment for its members.

Mensa accepts individuals who score at or above the 98th percentile on certain standardized IQ tests, such as the Stanford-Binet.

Borealis is published by Northern Michigan Mensa (3/496) once each month under the auspices of its Executive Committee.

After mandatory items, priority in the newsletter is given to matters appealing to members of the group which relate to their membership in Mensa. The content of the newsletter shall appeal to the general membership of Northern Michigan Mensa.

The newsletter shall not include matters which are indecent, scandalous, libelous, or invade someone's privacy, nor shall copyrighted material be used without the permission of the owner. Ethnic, racist, sexist, or religious slurs shall not be printed. Northern Michigan Mensa recognizes that the newsletter is addressed to both minors and adults; material printed will be appropriate for distribution to minors.

All submissions are welcome and encouraged. They may be sent via email or snail mail. They may be sent as attachments or in the body of the email.

Submissions requiring major editing are also welcome. If requested, the author may approve the editing before the article is published.

Photographs are also welcome. Please include a brief description of the photo and the name of the photographer. You may also include an entire article to accompany the photo.

Advertising:

Borealis accepts only short, "classified"-type advertisements from individual members. Notices should be of a non-commercial nature and include contact information.

Deadline:

The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month before the month of publication. Submissions received after that time may be considered if time and space permit.

Email submissions to:

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Northern Michigan Mensa

Executive Committee



Northern Michigan Mensa

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.nmm.us.mensa.org

ON THE COVER: Ice covered breakwater at the Traverse City Marina.
Photo by Stan Cain.

January Calendar

Brunch - Saturday, 10 January 2015 at 10:30 a.m.

How would you design a medal winning Olympic bobsled? Find out today!

We will meet at **Minerva's Restaurant** in the Park Place Hotel, 300 E. State Street, near downtown in Traverse City. We will meet in the small dining room. Our speaker will be Kevin Cain, lead engineer at the Aria Group, which, among other projects, designed the Team USA Bobsled for the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014.

Dining Out - Wednesday, 21 January at 5:30 p.m.

Let's celebrate 2015 in style at **Don's Drive-In**, 2030 N. US Highway 31, Traverse City. Food items include veggie burger, blue burger, tuna melt, hot roast beef sandwich with mashed potatoes and corn in addition to their famous burgers and shakes. First one there, grab a table.

Member News

Happy January Birthday

17 Richard B Thibeau
19 John R Phelps
21 Erik A Snyder

24 Michael B Cardwell
30 Donald L Curtis

Mensa Membership Milestones

(Years of Continuous Membership)

12 Aaron Stander
11 Melissa J Rennie
10 Sandra L Belyea
10 Dr M Teri Daunter

8 Susan Lynne Pitzer
4 Ellen Monahan
1 Mark L Banker
1 Jessica Mary Sullivan

Members New/Reinstated to Our Group - Welcome!

Greg J Baker
John R Phelps

<u>November 2014 Statistics</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>NMM</u>
Total membership	53426	83
New and reinstating membership	700	2
Offers of membership	407	0
New members since April 2014	2254	0
Reinstating members since April 2014	1994	1

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 11/30/2014. If you would like to change the privacy releases on file, use www.us.mensa.org and click on "Member Login". Then click on "Profile Update" and "PDQ Update"

December Brunch

A good crowd was on hand in December when we heard from our speaker Paul Stableton (in hat), who owns Landmark Books in Traverse City. They specialize in the collection and sale of used books, including out-of-print, autographed and first editions as well as modern fiction and Michiganiana.

Photo by Carole Eberly



Don't Read This!

If you made it past the title, you a) know how to read; b) like to read; c) have a curiosity about reading; and d) are a member of Bibliomensans. What? You are not yet a member of the illustrious Bibliomensans? Well, now you can be and hopefully you will give it a try in 2015!

Bibliomensans has been in existence since 2004 and has a loyal following. However, due to many reasons, the number of members has dwindled to a small, but dedicated group. We are encouraging those of you who have never attended to come and check us out.

Our format is simple. We meet every other month to provide ample time to finish the books. One member presents some background on the book - either about the author or the subject matter, whatever they deem to be of interest. Then we go around the table and allow each member to offer their perspective of the book, followed by an open and lively discussion!

To be a member is easy. You can let me know you would like to join us (see my email address below), or you can just show up! Our meeting information is listed on the Northern Michigan Mensa webpage providing the title and author of the book as well as the presenter, the meeting location, date, and time.

For 2015 we will be reading the following books:

Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown - The true story of an American farm boy who was on the University of Washington's rowing team challenging one of the greatest teams in the world for gold in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin in the middle of the Nazi reign while Adolf Hitler watched.

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by Isabel Wilkerson - This chronicles the long migration of nearly 6 million black people who fled the South for life in the northern part of the United States. It focuses on three people, specifically - telling their stories and struggles for a better life.

The Secrets of Mary Bowser by Lois Leveen - Another true story, this one is about the life of Mary Bowser. Mary was a slave to a wealthy Virginia family until the family's daughter decides to send Mary to Philadelphia to get an education. This story weaves in and out with the changes that occur in Mary's life from fighting for emancipation, to posing as a slave at the Confederate White House to spy on Jefferson Davis, and deceiving her closest allies to give aid to the Union command.

The Emperor of all Maladies by Siddhartha Mukherjee - This book is a Pulitzer Prize winner, which defines the story of cancer. It starts from the first documented cases thousands of years ago and brings us up to the current state of cures. It reads like a thriller, is riveting, and fascinating, providing insight into a disease that is affecting the world.

The Art Forger by B.A. Shapiro - A fictionalized story based on an actual art heist at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Two men dressed as police walked in, overtook and bound the guards, and stole 13 pieces of art by Rembrandt, Vermeer, and Degas. One of these paintings ends up in an artist's studio and she is asked to forge a copy of it in exchange for her own one-woman show, and then the plots thicken and turns and twists.

Poland by James Michener - Provides a history of eight centuries of Polish life based on three different families, the peasants Buk, the nobles Bukowski, and the Counts Lubonski. Michener brings us through their stories throughout the years, through the Nazis and the Communists, ending with a rebellion of modern farmers.

The great thing about book clubs is that you will read books that you typically wouldn't read and that is a good thing. I have found it has broadened my knowledge about the world because we have read some great historical books. Also, it has given me pause on some very provocative books. Of course, we always have great discussions in the process. Come join us in 2015!

Sherry McNamara
sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com

News from the RVC3

Next Region 3 Gatherings will be:

Dayton Area Mensa, March 27-29, 2015
Damnations 28 / Get Your Geek On

at Ramada Plaza Dayton, 2301 Wagner Ford Road, Dayton OH 45414
(937) 278-4871, \$72 Mensa Rate

Adult Registration: \$65 until 2/1/2015, \$75 at the door
Children 16 and under are ½ price
Check payable to: Dayton Mensa RG
Mail to: Karren Lehman, 7039 Monte Carlo Drive, Englewood OH 45322
Or Paypal at <http://www.dayton.us.mensa.org>

Southeast Michigan Mensa, April 24-26, 2015
SEMMantics 36
See details in the Bulletin soon or contact:
Jean Becker, Chair at JeanKBecker@gmail.com (810) 229-2113

Question of the month: What do you expect for your membership fees?
This month, I received an application in the mail for the VISA Black Card. The offer comes with VIP service, 24-hour concierge service and a stainless steel/carbon card for a monthly fee of \$495. This offer clearly only appeals to a minority of people. Mensa would be much different, if not extinct, if we paid even \$495 a year instead of a month.
I voted against a dues increase at the last quarterly meeting but am open to any good reason to increase dues when there are clear benefits to member resources. We shall see. But if someone wants 24-hour concierge service, I can forward the URL of the VISA Black Card.

Julia Ashley, RVC3
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614.448.6023

Editor's Note: The following is a response to Julia Ashley's December RVC column from Patricia Reising of Dayton Area Mensa.

To Julia Ashley, RVC3, in response to December's column:
Dear Julia,

I'm surprised and disappointed that you are coming down on the side of the "establishment" as we said back in the day. When the great cry arose on the Mensa talk sites, "Trow da rascals out!" I thought, yeah – but not our rascal. You warn against voting for amendments that are inherently in conflict; in fact the same caveat is in bold type on the Mensa website, the page that introduces the myriad measures on this spring's ballot. I contend such a comment is a thinly veiled admonition to vote for only one – #1 – proposal, to prevent conflict. As a partisan individual, you may give that warning; as an impartial source of information, the Mensa website may not. I know you have thought this through on your own, but your recommendation sounds (especially to those of us paying attention to the shifting sands of this election-scape) like spouting the Party-Line.

When the membership voted to choose the National Ombudsman by a vote of current local ombudsmen, AMC could no longer choose the person who might be judging them. If the National Ombudsman did not owe his job to the committee, then he might be less likely to side with them in a member dispute. I'm not claiming this is a conscious fear, but that is the practical result. A freely elected ombudsman is able to judge and perceive without bias. One problem with the bylaws might be overlooked since it seems to treat the Ombudsman like other AMC members. Even though the National Ombudsman is voted in by local group ombudsmen, he can be removed from office by a vote of the AMC. This voting in and drumming out could continue until the AMC has an Ombudsman they like. Not fair and possibly not legitimate to veto a vote of the local Ombudsmen.

In order to know the will of the membership, the National Ombudsman needs to keep in contact with local groups and their ombudsmen. Likewise, to know the will of the AMC, he needs to see firsthand what is going on: the sub-context as well as the substance of discussions, the table talk that reveals truer opinions than the votes, the interactions among committee members, the factions and friendships that make a committee greater than the sum of its officers.

The cost of providing the Ombudsman with the same travel benefits as RVCs is trivial compared to other AMC expenses. I view the measure as a small-minded attempt to humiliate the ombudsman and discourage his participation in meetings, ALL meetings. If #1 passes, only a wealthy person could afford to be Na-

tional Ombudsman and pay his own way to business meetings all over the country. He is not being treated exactly like a committee member, unless all committee members are equal, but some are more equal than others.

Proposition #1, the shotgun bylaws, say a lot about the National Ombudsman – so much so that it would appear they were rewritten for the express purpose of rendering the office superfluous and the officer powerless. To wit: "... National Ombudsman has the right to documents ... provided that such information is not subject to legal privilege." In any dispute, one side or both could give to an attorney much relevant material for the sole purpose of keeping the opponent from seeing it. Binding arbitration via ombudsman should limit the involvement of lawyers, not give the lawyers greater powers than the National Ombudsman. Since there is no mandate to use the services of our ombudsmen, there should be no reason to limit those services once both parties agree to arbitration. In the case of a legitimate confidential document, current civil law should apply and put it beyond the scope of ombudsman mediation. Likewise, a dispute calling for legal services is above the ombudsman level.

You've singled out one proposal as an example of voting for an amendment based on who proposed it. Is #12 the only one you see as problematic? I suggest likewise that the bylaws proposal #1 does not gain provenance by being cobbled together by the AMC. I agree that personal friendship may not provide the best measure of the worth of an amendment, but sharing the same vision and politics as those who support it is a very good reason to vote for it. We tend to make friends with like-minded members, so friendships should correlate closely with voting decisions. Conversely, I would be suspicious of a proposal promoted by anyone I perceive as not sharing my views on the welfare of AML, which, unfortunately, includes the AMC as a body and some officers individually.

I suggest that no proposal has ever been written that wouldn't profit from time back at the drawing board. There is no time to make a very good amendment excellent. If the proposed new bylaws are voted in, the National Ombudsman will become a National Round File, a place where complaints and suggestions go to die.

I ask my fellow loyal Mensa members to vote NO on proposition #1, Replacement of the text of Bylaws of American Mensa in entirety, don't just leave it blank. I further ask for a YES vote on proposal #12, Restore and Protect Powers of the National Ombudsman, the amendment to restore the power and dignity to the office that stands up for us and protects the society we call our own. Mensa needs an effective National Ombudsman.

Patricia Reising
Dayton Area Mensa

2015 Calendar Foundation Donation Reminder

Now through the end of January 2015 when you donate at least \$50 to the Mensa Education and Research Foundation you will receive an official Mensa 2015 desk calendar while supplies last. The Mensa calendar provides a daily brain puzzle all year long. To make your donation, have your credit card ready and call 1-800-66-MENSA (63672) or go online to MensaFoundation.org. If you choose to mail in your donation please include the code: CAL-50 to receive your calendar. The Mensa Foundation helps fund recognition programs, activities, and scholarships for members, non-members and gifted youth. Make a smart investment in intelligence. Give to the Mensa Foundation. (one calendar per household)

Julie Garcia at
JulieG@americanmensa.org or
817-607-0060 ext 5547.

New Newsletter Mailing Method

This month's Borealis will be emailed using **two** methods: The old method using my personal member email list and the new method using the email addresses and newsletter mailing option selected on the National website.

Therefore, those who have an email address on file with the National office **and** who have selected the email option for receipt of newsletters should receive two emails. The one from National will contain a link to the newsletter on their website while the one from me will contain the newsletter as an attachment.

When the new system has been verified then the old system will be removed and those not receiving emails by the new system, will start receiving paper copies in the mail.

Confusing? Yes, but it will all work eventually. If you have any problems or questions please contact me at nmmBorealis@yahoo.com.

By Stan Cain
Editor, Borealis