

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 13 Number 5

March 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:

Stan Cain
nmmborealis@yahoo.com

Northern Michigan Mensa

Executive Committee



Northern Michigan Mensa

VOTING MEMBERS

Local Secretary	Stan Cain	231-938-1506	nmmborealis@yahoo.com
Deputy Loc Sec	KC Mowrey	231-775-8785	kcmowrey@charter.net
Treasurer	Susan A. Styles	231-357-5233	seas@umich.edu
At Large	Erik A. Snyder	989-370-0993	easnyder@yahoo.com
At Large	Carole Eberly	989-772-4067	cmeberly@yahoo.com

www.nmm.us.mensa.org

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Newsletter Editor	Stan Cain	231-938-1506	nmmborealis@yahoo.com
Financial Overseer	Richard Thibeau	231-590-2052	rthibeau@coslink.net
Membership	Richard Thibeau	231-590-2052	rthibeau@coslink.net
Ombudsman	Pete Turkus	231-941-8321	petencheri@chartermi.net
Petoskey Area Subgroup Coordinator	Vacant		
Program Chair	Carole Eberly	989-772-4067	cmeberly@yahoo.com
Publicity Chair	Vacant		
Scholarship Chair	Kymberli Wregglesworth		kymberliapril@src-milp.com
SIGHT Coordinator	Melissa J. Rennie	231-889-0892	renmeij@yahoo.com
Testing Coordinator	John D. Schultz	231-275-6735	jsvoyageur@gmail.com
Web Contact	Vacant		

Send address correction c/o
American Mensa LTD.
1229 Corporate Drive West
Arlington, TX 76006-6103

OTHER MEMBERS

Proctors	Susan A. Styles	231-357-5233	seas@umich.edu
	Melissa J. Rennie	231-889-0892	renmeij@yahoo.com
Regional Vice-Chairman	Julia Ashley	614.448.6023	RVC3@us.mensa.org

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

ON THE COVER: It's Winter. It's Northern Michigan.
Photo by Stan Cain

March Calendar

Brunch - Saturday, 14 March 2015 at 10:30 a.m.

Mensans love card and board games. Right? Therefore, our speakers will be Jim Muratzki and Barbara Overdier, creators of card and board games. Jim and Barbara are owners of MackinacTreasure.com – check the site out. Then show up and hear how they established their company and what it's all about. We will meet at our usual place, the Bay Town Kitchen, 420 Munson, Traverse City. **BUT, note that they have just changed the name and sign to read "MI Grille" - same location, same address.**

Dining Out - Wednesday, 25 March at 5:30 p.m.

East side (Don's in January), West side (Big Papa's Pub in February) and East side again at **Randy's Diner** for this month. It's **located at 1120 Carver St.** about a half block east of Garfield. First one there grab a table.

And, Coming up in April...

BOOK CLUB - Saturday, 4 April 2015

The April Book Club selection will be ***The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*** by Isabel Wilkerson, and presented by Heather Gruenberg-Seger.

In this epic, beautifully written masterwork, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life.

From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America. Wilkerson compares this epic migration to the migrations of other peoples in history. She interviewed more than a thousand people, and gained access to new data and official records, to write this definitive and vividly dramatic account of how these American journeys unfolded, altering our cities, our country, and ourselves.

Wilkerson brilliantly captures their first treacherous and exhausting cross-country trips by car and train and their new lives in colonies that grew into ghettos, as well as how they changed these cities with southern food, faith and culture and improved them with discipline, drive and hard work. Both a riveting microcosm and a major assessment, ***The Warmth of Other Suns*** is a bold, remarkable and riveting work, a superb account of an "unrecognized immigration" within our own land.

Bibliomensans Reading List - 2014

Here is the list of Book Club selections for the year. The club meets every other month and any member is welcome to attend.

FEBRUARY 7

Book: *Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics*
Author: Daniel James Brown
Presenter: Sherry McNamara

APRIL 4

Book: *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*
Author: Isabel Wilkerson
Presenter: Heather Gruenberg-Seger

JUNE 6

Book: *The Secrets of Mary Bowser*
Author: Lois Leveen
Presenter: Stan Cain

AUGUST 1

Book: *The Emperor of all Maladies*
Author: Siddhartha Mukherjee
Presenter: Jim McDermott

OCTOBER 3

Book: *The Art Forger*
Author: B.A. Shapiro
Presenter: Stan Cain

DECEMBER 5

Book: *Poland*
Author: James Michener
Presenter: Jim McDermott

You will receive a 10% discount at Horizon Books for the purchase of one of these titles. If you also have an Horizon membership discount, then you will receive both discounts.

News from the RVC3

Upcoming Region 3 Gatherings:

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: \$75

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 or contact:

Jean Becker, Chair at JeanKBecker@gmail.com (810) 229-2113

My apologies for a very short column this month. I am very busy booking speakers for the AG in Louisville and in the midst of an apartment move that has evaded all attempts to follow an organized plan. Next month I'll have lots to say about the bylaws on the ballot. Voting begins April 15 and ends May 31.

Regards,
Julia Ashley, RVC3
rvc3@us.mensa.org
614.448.6023

Mensa National Elections

I have undertaken to write a series of three articles about the upcoming Mensa National Elections. (The first two are printed below.) The first, "2015 Mensa National Elections - **A Closer Look**," was first published in the February issue of my local group newsletter, the French Broad Mensa *BROADCAST*. The second, "**Three Things We Can Fix This Election Cycle**," is in the March issue. The third article, tentatively titled "Voting," is scheduled to appear in April, just before the beginning of balloting.

Shayna Mali

Editor's Note:

Shayna Mali is a Life Member from French Broad Mensa in Asheville, North Carolina Her articles are reprinted here by permission.

2015 Mensa National Elections - A Closer Look Shayna Mali

In the 2015 Mensa national elections next April, there will be no fewer than thirteen (13) different bylaws amendments for members to evaluate and vote on. There will also be multiple candidates for several of the national offices. This level of interest and participation on the national level has not been seen for quite some time - and it has gotten my attention. Having done a fair amount of research and then reviewed all 13 of the proposed bylaws amendments, I find myself unable to support anything substantive put forward by the current American Mensa Committee (AMC). Nor will I be supporting any of the incumbents on the AMC ExComm. Discussions continue on Facebook, yahoo groups and the Mensa Online Community, as well as in person across the country. I invite you to join the conversation.

A significant issue is the pattern of continuing dues increases, outpacing the inflation rate. The current AMC has approved these dues hikes but, until now, they have resisted repeated attempts by the current Treasurer, Nick Sanford - now running for Chairman - to institute automatic annual dues increases. We will have other choices for both Treasurer and Chairman this year; it behooves us to consider how our dues money is spent and whether we are getting additional value for higher annual dues. Several members have pointed to the ongoing expansion of the National Office without an ac-

companying growth in membership numbers. Others have called for a different approach to the budget process and an accompanying rollback of dues; to achieve this, we would need quite a different AMC and ExComm.

A careful reading of the proposed bylaws amendments, along with a review of this year's AMC meetings agendas and minutes, reveals quite a lot about the thinking of the incumbents who participated in the creation of AMC-approved amendments and who would be operating under the revised rules if those amendments were to pass. A recent RVC column by Julia Ashley (Region 3) and the subsequent response from Dayton Area Mensa's Ombudsman Pat Reising elucidate some of the issues relative to the position and role of the National Ombudsman. The links below lead to an exchange regarding two of the proposed bylaws amendments: #1, Replacement of the text of By-laws of American Mensa in entirety, and #12, Restore and Protect Powers of the National Ombudsman. An associated proposal, #11, Duties and Responsibilities of the National Ombudsman, is referred to indirectly in the writings and should be considered as part of the same discussion. Among these three amendments, I support #12 and plan to vote against #1 and #11.

[To read RVC3 Julia Ashley's December Report in MPULSE, Dec. 2014 \(page 14\), visit the Mensa website, navigate to READ - Group Newsletters - "Filter by newsletter name" in the center of the page, then choose MPULSE from the list. Click on "search and filter." then click on the Dec. 2014 issue.](#)

[To read "Response to December's RVC3 Column," by Pat Reising, click on the Jan. 2015 MPULSE. Reising's "Response" is on page 21.](#)

Editor's Note:

These two articles are also in Borealis for December, 2014 and January 2015.

Three Things We Can Fix This Election Cycle **Shayna Mali**

Mensa seems to have lost its way as an organization. This election offers us an unusual opportunity to examine who we think we are, where we want to be and who we shall choose to lead us toward our goals. Happily, these days it is relatively easy for members to get a sense of what's been going on. Just click on a few links, scroll down to the referenced articles and - voila - enlightenment!

“Here's the central question for Mensa's national election this year
- **Is Mensa a club or is Mensa a business?**” (1)

Fix Mensa's Finances

One reason for the incessant push to increase dues is the Equity Restoration program necessitated by the Inpharmatica trademark lawsuit initiated by the AMC in 2009. Few members are aware of this huge deficit; AMC actions taken at the March 2014 meeting could cause this important element of Mensa's internal finances to slip quietly off the radar. (2)(4)

We can - and must - do better when preparing and administering our budgets. (2)(3)(7)

Fix the American Mensa Committee (AMC)

“[Actions were] taken last year by the AMC, in violation of American Mensa Bylaws, to restrict [the National Ombudsman] from having the same information as AMC members.” (4)

“Some members have mentioned perceived disparities between the current AML bylaws and the process of the [AMC].” (5)

Chairman Burg's “dismissive response to comments from concerned members, display[ed] an unfortunate lack of leadership on the part of the person who was elected to lead American Mensa.” (6)

Two proposed bylaws amendments address “problematic conduct on the part of the AMC.” (7)

Fix the National Office (NO)

The NO has experienced:

“[a] steady loss of senior staff members under increasingly unpleasant circumstances...
over-budget expenditures year after year...
poorly-planned campaign roll-outs,
increasing reliance on... paid outsourcing firms instead of Mensa volunteers” (8) and

significant flaws in the processes and practices necessary for maintenance and upgrades to our technology systems. (9)

The Co-Chairs reported significant problems with NO staff and outside consultants while organizing the 2014 Boston AG. (4)

Despite this, Executive Director Donahoo was granted a salary increase.

In Conclusion

Ultimately, we members are responsible for Mensa. The AMC and National Office staff are empowered – by us – to handle our money and conduct the business of Mensa. Our club is currently headed in a less-than-brilliant direction. The candidates and bylaws amendments you vote for will affect whether we continue along the same path or change direction. When we ask questions, we must insist on meaningful answers. An informed vote is an *intelligent* vote.

References:

- Rich Olcott, "Mensa Elections, National and Local," [Memphis Mensa Newsletter, Dec 2014](#), p.10
- Cam Smart, RVC2, "Smart M-Talk," [Penn Central, May 2014](#), p.2
- Alison Brown, "AML Election Issues – Fiscal," [MIND, Feb 2014](#), p.19
- Mike Eager, [LocSec Column, August 2014](#) (excerpt: [SFRM Intelligencer, Aug 2014](#), p.3)
- Cam Smart, RVC2, "Smart M-Talk," [Magniloquence, Nov 2014](#), p.4
- Mike Eager, LocSec Column, [SFRM Intelligencer, Jan 2015](#), p.3
- Mike Eager, LocSec Column, [SFRM Intelligencer, Dec 2014](#), p.3
- Rich Olcott, "Up roar at the National Office," [Memphis Mensa Newsletter, Oct 2014](#), p.7
- Mike Eager, "LocSec Column: American Mensa IT," [SFRM Intelligencer, Feb 2015](#), p.3

[To access the newsletters listed, visit the Mensa website, navigate to READ – Group Newsletters – "Filter by newsletter name" \(in the center of the page\), then select the newsletter name from the list. Click on "search and filter." then click on the desired issue.](#)

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✂-----

Name _____

Name for ID Badge _____ over 21? _____

For non-members, name of Mensa sponsor: _____

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Address _____

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I'd like to know more about how I can lend a hand in the following area(s):

Hospitality Speaker Shepherd Registration Contacting People Publicity

Photographer Setup/Tear Down Shopping Transportation Kids' Room Other