

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 13 Number 6

April 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
nmborealis@yahoo.com

Northern Michigan Mensa

Executive Committee



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

ON THE COVER: Cold enough? A Northern Michigan resident shivers with the polar bear at the Dennon Museum, Traverse City.
Photo by Sue Styles.

April Calendar

Book Club - Saturday, 4 April 2015 at 11:00 a.m.

The April book club selection is *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson. The book will be presented by Heather Gruenberg-Seger, and discussion will follow. Meet at BC Pizza, 3186 LaFranier, TC.

Brunch - Saturday, 11 April 2015 at 10:30 a.m.

OK, it's time to take a break from doing your taxes. So show up at the **MI Grille** (the old Bay Town Kitchen where we've always met). Same place, same address - 420 Munson. Names keep changing in TC. Speakers will be us.

Dining Out - Wednesday, 22 April 2015 at 5:30 p.m.

Pangea's Pizza, 135 E. Front St., TC. It's time to eat downtown before the tourists take over. First one there grab a table. And, if you like, you can grab an ice cream cone next door. What's not to like? Pizza, ice cream and big brains!

Editor's Notes

With no note from the RVC this month, we have taken the liberty of presenting some information from candidates for national office in American Mensa. In particular, on pages 7-8 is a statement from a candidate for treasurer regarding what our ever-increasing dues are paying for. Regardless of your view on politics at the national level, dues are a topic of interest to most of us.

As it seems that this election is more heated than usual, we have also included the third and final article from Shayna Mali, life member from North Carolina. Ms. Mali provides several sources of information about national election issues. Ballots for the national election will be distributed in mid-April with voting to end May 31st.

Member News

Happy April Birthday

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|------------------|
| 3 | Robert E. Anderson | 18 | Sandra L. Belyea |
| 10 | John G. Swartout | 18 | Carrie M. Beemon |

Mensa Membership Milestones

(Years of Continuous Membership)

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 31 | Cherie Marie Gabriel | 9 | Kymberli A Wregglesworth |
| 25 | Thomas Mac Neill Barnhart | 6 | John Robert Spraggins |
| 16 | Dr John D. Schultz | 6 | Thomas C Remsperger |
| 14 | Martha Barton | 1 | Rosemary Hawley |

February 2015 Statistics

| | AML | NMM |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Total membership | 55191 | 85 |
| New and reinstating membership | 720 | 0 |
| Offers of membership | 224 | 0 |
| New members since April 2014 | 3052 | 0 |
| Reinstating members since April 2014 | 2948 | 2 |

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 2/28/2015. 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".

Does it make you smile when you see your name in this section? Do you look for people you know? We would be happy to list your "news" here as well - a new job, a book published, a new baby or grandbaby, an anniversary, a retirement, or even an exotic trip! Send it to nmmboREALIS@yahoo.com and help keep your fellow Mensans up to date! We'd love to hear from you.

PREPARE FOR THE JUNE BOOK CLUB!

Book: The Secrets of Mary Bowser
Author: Lois Leveen

Horizon Books offers a 10% discount if you mention Bibliomensans.

Brunch Happenings

Our latest brunch in mid-March featured Jim Muratzki and Barbara Overdier, owners of MackinacTreasure.com. Jim and Barbara have created a board game about Mackinac Island with five different ways to play, and an abbreviated card game version with just two of the simplest games. We were all impressed with the amount of time they have put into this project, in addition to their “day” jobs! Barbara is a professional photographer and contributed many of the beautiful photographs featured on the cards used in the games. Jim works in IT and developed much of the logic and strategy of the games.



The process of designing a game was interesting to the group, and Jim and Barbara fielded our questions with aplomb. While the game is currently available at a few specialty stores, it was a surprise to learn that there is a company in Wisconsin that will produce just one copy of a board game once the creators have set it up with the publisher. The current one-off publishing method also allows the couple to continue to make tweaks as desired, to improve the game. This is the primary way consumers can purchase Mackinac Treasure until the creators have the capital to print a large run with a board game company located in Battle Creek, MI.

The games have been tested with a broad variety of players, including children, and received good reviews from professional historians. No knowledge of Mackinac Island is necessary to play, but everyone is certain to learn something about the Island’s history, cultural heritage, geology, plants, and animals. Some of the information also relates to the wider Northern Michigan area.

Mensa National Elections

I have undertaken to write a series of three articles about the upcoming Mensa National Elections. [The first two were printed here last month.] 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, titled “**Informed 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.

Informed Voting

Shayna Mali

Official American Mensa Committee (AMC) recommendations are not reliable; members must look elsewhere this year to be well-informed. Happily, a cornucopia of resources exists to assist all voters, including:

- candidates' websites and blogs (1), some including their positions on the proposed bylaws amendments (PBA);
- articles in [local group newsletters](#), by an increasing number of contributors;
- official documents on the [AML website](#) (AMC meeting agendas, minutes, special reports);
- AML Community [Officers' ShareHouse](#) (OSH) postings (2);
- relevant historical essays (3);
- continuing discussions on Facebook, Yahoo! Groups, the [Mensa Online Community forums](#) and in person; and
- online or telephone conversations with the candidates themselves.

Another welcome guide is the online supplement to the printed *Bulletin*, which includes ALL qualifying pro and con statements on the PBAs. (4) Also online is the [Bylaws Committee \(BC\) Statement for Spring 2015 Referendum](#). (5) Members have expressed overwhelming opposition to Amendments 1, 7, 8 and 11 (PBAs the BC *Statement* supports). Members support Amendments 4 and 10 (which the BC *Statement* opposes with no apparent basis). It is not surprising that a simple spreadsheet (*PBA Positions Analysis* (2)) illustrates that BC *Statement* recommendations are diametrically opposed to member sentiments. (6)

In considering my personal votes, I utilized all of the above resources. I conducted face-to-face and email conversations with current AMC members, local group officers, other leaders and trusted members. I asked myself: What are each candidate's priorities, and how do they propose to implement their ideas? How do they plan to address members' concerns and restore trust in the AMC and the National Office? If they are currently on the AMC, what motions have they authored, presented, voted for or against? Which PBAs do each of the candidates support or oppose – and why? And why are AMC-proposed amendments and BC *Statement* recommendations so at odds with the majority of member-submitted statements, notably on the most controversial issues?

By these criteria, the most promising candidates seem to be the following:

Chairman: STONE
1VC: KEMPER
2VC: NEEMIDGE
Secretary: FARRAR, NORRIS
Treasurer: DAVIS, SALKIN

Published member sentiment on the PBAs can be summarized as follows (6):

NO on PBAs 1 – 7 – 8 – 11
YES on PBAs 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 9 – 10 – 12 – 13

Considering the candidates' positions on these PBAs, and the other insights I have gained, the positions summarized above appear to be generally in the best interest of the membership. These are observations only; my own research continues. I urge you to clarify your personal criteria for evaluating the candidates and proposed bylaws amendments, learn all you can about them and then cast your own well-informed, *intelligent* vote.

References:

- 1) As of this writing: debstoneforchair.wordpress.com, nicksanford.com, bakerink.com, lorinorrisforsecretary.wordpress.com, www.gruebele.com, farrarandaway.wordpress.com, billdavisfortreasurer.com, www.tazcriss.com, www.rvc4.blogspot.com.
- 2) AML Community OSH: <http://community.us.mensa.org/media>
- 3) amyx.org/mensa, www.dcn.davis.ca.us/~sander/mensa
- 4) www.us.mensa.org/lead/amc/elections/proposed-bylaws-amendments. To view pro and con statements, click on an amendment and scroll below the black line. I recommend starting with #13 and working your way UP the list.
- 5) Chaired by Past Past Chair Bakke, the AMC-appointed [Bylaws Commit-](#)

[tee](#) includes current Chair Burg and Executive Director Donahoo, plus three other (voting) AMC members and four non-AMC (non-voting) members.

- 6) As quantified by the number of pro and con statements submitted by AMC-associated writers (including former Chair Jean Becker) vs. those submitted by “regular” members. See *PBA Positions Analysis* on the OSH (2), above.

Lori Norris – Candidate for AML Secretary

I am running for Secretary of the American Mensa Committee (AMC). One of the main reasons that I am running is that over the past few years it seems that Mensa is relying less on volunteers and is becoming much more corporate-like. I have been a Mensan volunteer for over 20 years and strongly believe that Mensa’s strength lies with our volunteers.

As a Regional Vice Chairman (RVC) for the northeast from 2007-2011, I was an advocate for local groups. Local groups run on volunteer energy. I believe that Mensa should provide better support to the local groups, both financial and through better communications such as handbooks and online resources. There needs to be a way for local groups to share their successes (as well as failures) so we can learn from each other. I would love to work on a program designed to share event ideas, recruitment programs and community involvement projects.

If I am elected, there are several goals which I would work towards. I am hopeful that a new AMC can find a way to utilize more of our members’ expertise before seeking outside contractors. I would like to see increased transparency with detailed minutes and fewer (and shorter) closed sessions. A main focus should be on responsible budgeting and the spending of our dues. The AMC is accountable to the membership and should be responsive to comments, complaints and suggestions.

We need to revitalize Mensa and improve our recruitment of new members and retention of existing members. I believe that we need to take a thorough look at all of Mensa’s programs, set realistic goals for these programs and determine which ones are successful and forward looking.

For information on my opinions on the proposed Bylaws Amendments and other issues facing Mensa, please read my website (LoriNorrisForSecretary.wordpress.com), see the Lori Norris for Secretary Facebook page, or send me an e-mail at SecretaryLoriNorris@gmail.com.

I would appreciate your vote!

Understanding the National Budget: Where Your \$70 Goes

By Rob Salkin, J.D., M.B.A., M.S.

American Mensa has revenue that exceeds \$4 million a year and well over 50,000 members. The bulk of about \$1 million in revenue comes from national event fees, testing fees, licensing & sponsorship contracts, and investments. The rest, the vast majority of revenue, is generated from dues fees, currently \$70 for one year of membership.

The 2015 - 2016 proposed budget overview (PDF: <http://bit.ly/mensabudget2015>) shows income and expenses separately without analysis (i.e. profit/loss) on likely related budget areas (e.g. revenue from the Annual Gathering compared to costs associated with that event). Most of the overhead is lumped into the Administrative & General section, which makes it difficult for someone without more information to make an accurate comparison.

For simplicity, we can break down the budget by how the \$70 is divided among all of the budget areas, ordered by allocation amount:

| Budget Area | Cost | Percent | % X \$70 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------|----------|
| Administrative & General | \$ 1,994,769.00 | 46.87% | \$ 32.81 |
| Local Group Support | \$ 567,014.00 | 13.32% | \$ 9.33 |
| Publications-Communications | \$ 282,730.00 | 6.64% | \$ 4.65 |
| Membership Services | \$ 279,225.00 | 6.56% | \$ 4.59 |
| International | \$ 247,886.00 | 5.82% | \$ 4.08 |
| Events | \$ 242,071.00 | 5.69% | \$ 3.98 |
| Marketing | \$ 143,373.00 | 3.37% | \$ 2.36 |
| Board Meetings | \$ 122,460.00 | 2.88% | \$ 2.01 |
| Testing | \$ 106,945.00 | 2.51% | \$ 1.76 |
| Foundation | \$ 56,900.00 | 1.34% | \$ 0.94 |
| Licensing & Sponsorship | \$ 46,755.00 | 1.10% | \$ 0.77 |
| Web Services | \$ 45,371.00 | 1.07% | \$ 0.75 |
| Board Administration | \$ 30,158.00 | 0.71% | \$ 0.50 |
| Name & Logo Protection | \$ 25,013.00 | 0.59% | \$ 0.41 |
| Leadership Development | \$ 20,645.00 | 0.49% | \$ 0.34 |
| RVC Miscellaneous Expense | \$ 20,000.00 | 0.47% | \$ 0.33 |
| Nominations & Elections | \$ 14,000.00 | 0.33% | \$ 0.23 |
| Gifted Youth Program | \$ 9,175.00 | 0.22% | \$ 0.15 |
| Hearings & Ombudsman | \$ 1,400.00 | 0.03% | \$ 0.02 |
| TOTAL | \$ 4,255,890.00 | 100% | \$ 70.00 |

Without claiming this is entirely realistic, if we make the assumption based on the budget area titles that testing, events, and licensing & sponsorship have their revenue and costs entirely represented by their respective budget areas, they are money makers for American Mensa. So, we can remove assignment of dues money to those areas. The cost of publications isn't entirely offset by related income, but we can reduce the dues allocation to that area

by the amount of income that area generates. So, we end up with a slightly different allocation:

| Budget Area | Cost | Percent | % X \$70 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------|----------|
| Administrative & General | \$ 1,994,769.00 | 52.74% | \$ 36.92 |
| Local Group Support | \$ 567,014.00 | 14.99% | \$ 10.49 |
| Membership Services | \$ 279,225.00 | 7.38% | \$ 5.17 |
| International | \$ 247,886.00 | 6.55% | \$ 4.59 |
| Publications-Communications | \$ 205,054.00 | 5.42% | \$ 3.79 |
| Marketing | \$ 143,373.00 | 3.79% | \$ 2.65 |
| Board Meetings | \$ 122,460.00 | 3.24% | \$ 2.27 |
| Foundation | \$ 56,900.00 | 1.50% | \$ 1.05 |
| Web Services | \$ 45,371.00 | 1.20% | \$ 0.84 |
| Board Administration | \$ 30,158.00 | 0.80% | \$ 0.56 |
| Name & Logo Protection | \$ 25,013.00 | 0.66% | \$ 0.46 |
| Leadership Development | \$ 20,645.00 | 0.55% | \$ 0.38 |
| RVC Miscellaneous Expense | \$ 20,000.00 | 0.53% | \$ 0.37 |
| Nominations & Elections | \$ 14,000.00 | 0.37% | \$ 0.26 |
| Gifted Youth Program | \$ 9,175.00 | 0.24% | \$ 0.17 |
| Hearings & Ombudsman | \$ 1,400.00 | 0.04% | \$ 0.03 |
| TOTAL | \$ 3,782,443.00 | 100.0% | \$ 70.00 |

It should be noted that these figures are based on a hypothetical reality in which all members pay \$70 per year and a variety of other variables aren't a concern. For example, the international component, the amount of money American Mensa pays to Mensa International, is currently 6% of yearly dues or \$4.20 in this case. However, not all membership plans are treated equally, such as a yearly membership compared to an existing life membership. Our calculations generated values of \$4.08 and \$4.59 for that international component. So, you can see that the values are in the ballpark but not necessarily the exact figure we'd expect for a yearly membership. This doesn't mean you shouldn't trust these figures to get a feel for where your money is going. Rather, this should explain why informed members might notice that the figures are slightly different than what they might expect them to be.

Your take away from this article is up to you. If the numbers look right to you, then all is well. This confirms that your money is being spent appropriately. However, if you notice some things that don't seem quite right (e.g. do we spend enough on leadership development considering we rely heavily on volunteer leaders?), then this is a call to action. Write your Regional Vice Chair or another national office holder with your concerns, and be sure to vote in the election between April 1st and May 15th!

Rob Salkin is a Mensa life member and has held many offices in American Mensa, including National Membership Officer, local group President (LocSec), Regional Gathering (RG) Chair, and Special Interest Group (SIG) Coordinator. Rob is running for Treasurer of American Mensa. Please visit RobSalkin.com for more information on his campaign or to contact him with questions, comments, or complaints regarding his (Excel's) math.