



Borealis

September Calendar

Bibliomensans next meet October 3 at 11:00 a.m. on Zoom not at B. C. Pizza

BRUNCH - CANCELLED until further notice

There will NOT be a picnic this year

Executive Committee

We are looking for volunteers to fill our vacancies and have an assistant for each position

VOTING MEMBERS

Local Secretary	Gene Fry	231-668-1362	gfry.cherokee@gmail.com
Deputy Loc Sec	KC Mowrey	231-775-8785	kcmowrey@charter.net
Treasurer	Richard Thibeau	231-590-2052	rthibeau@coslink.net

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Newsletter Editor	Richard Thibeau		
Financial Overseer	Vacant		
Membership	Bernie Hanchett	231-946-5177	barneydulittle@hotmail.com
Program Chair	Vacant		
Scholarship Chair	Kymberli Wregglesworth	(989) 733-4820	kwregglesworth@oacsd.com
Testing Coordinator	John D. Schultz	231--640-4569 (new#)	jsvoyageur@gmail.com

Sherry McNamara will be hosting Bibliomensans meetings via ZOOM instead of in person. Contact her to get the invitation to Zoom ... sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com

Congratulations! Northern Michigan Mensa has earned Mensa's Prolific Owl Award for the highest membership growth percentage nationwide. Northern Michigan Mensa grew by 17.9% over last year.

Bibliomensans

This is the schedule for the Bibliomensans' 2020 reading meetings. Anybody is welcome, whether or not they have read the book. If they are Mensans they are members of Bibliomensans. We meet at 11:00 a.m. on the first Saturday of the month at B. C. Pizza, at 3186 LaFranier Rd. in Traverse City. Zip code is 49686 (restaurant is at SE corner of Airport and LaFranier Rds.). Meetings are held in February, April, June, August, October, and December. In August we meet on the second Saturday of the month. The presenter introduces the book and then everybody goes around the table, voicing their opinion. After that the discussion is open. I am now the contact person, Heather J. Gruenberg-Seger, I can be reached at home: 231.932.9501. All other information on the book group link is still valid.

February -- Tara Westover's 'Educated', 334 pp. Heather Gruenberg-Seger is presenting.

April -- Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring', 378 pp. in 1962. Jim McDermott is presenting.

June -- Steadman and Clark's 'Tethered Mercury', 288 pp. Sherry McNamara is presenting.

August -- David Grann's 'Killers of the Flower Moon', 359 pp. Stan Cain is presenting.

October -- Yuval Noah Harari's 'Sapiens', 498 pp. Heather Gruenberg-Seger is presenting.

December -- David Wallace-Wells' 'The Uninhabitable Earth', 320 pp. Jim McDermott is presenting.

**Sherry McNamara will be hosting virtual ZOOM meetings instead of in person. Contact her to get the invitation to Zoom ...
sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com**



News from the RVC3

John Voymas, Vice Chairperson, Region 3

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On July 11, 2020, the quarterly meeting of the American Mensa Committee (AMC, our board of directors) was held electronically. During that meeting, the decision was made to remove the phrase "American Mensa" from two Facebook groups: Hospitality and Firehouse and to no longer promote them as the two "Mensa Facebook Groups" on the us.mensa.org website. A committee was later formed to determine how best to transition these two groups to being Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The committee includes a representative from Firehouse and a representative from Hospitality.

This was not an easy decision. During the AMC meeting each of the national officers were given two two-minute opportunities to present their thoughts on each motion. The decision was met with both member support and member disagreement. One thing that was not made clear to the membership is a definition of the problem that we were trying to resolve. I could have done better on that. This article will define what I saw as the issues and my thought process in why I supported these changes.

These two groups were created from American Mensa's original Facebook presence, "American Mensa Facebook" (referred to as AMFB). I was a member of AMFB and when it became clear several years ago that there were two very different sub-groups within AMFB, it was split into the two Facebook groups. One set of interests wanted some sort of rules and milder discussions (including that some topics would be off-limits). That became American Mensa Hospitality. The other significant set of interests was to have a Facebook space where there were no rules set by Mensa and no moderation of any kind by Mensa, where any topic could be discussed. That became American Mensa Firehouse. I joined both Facebook groups.

Since both groups were promoted as "the" Mensa Facebook presence, all members, including those who had just joined Mensa, were encouraged to check them out. A brief disclaimer was on the webpage that promoted these two groups. Some members joined these two groups and found them to be much too wild and free, especially Firehouse. Since these two groups were promoted as "the" face of American Mensa, some of these members then viewed Mensa as an organization that they did not want to be associated with. Some members did not renew. Some members told their friends to avoid joining Mensa due to some of the posts. Some felt that they were not welcome in American Mensa after joining these group or that American Mensa was a group of extreme right-wing folks and bigots.

Part of the challenge for me was how to balance the need for American Mensa to be viewed in a welcoming light, for its brand to be a positive one. This second point affects our ability to keep dues in check. When we look for sponsorships and relationships that can provide us with non-dues revenue, this is a major factor. Members often express a concern that dues are already too high. We need to increase non-dues revenue. We need to be a "brand" that businesses and other organizations feel good about being associated with.

As a member of Firehouse, I also see a need to have a Facebook group where all topics are allowed and discussed. Colleges and universities used to be that kind of space. Then, politically-correct speech came along, followed by "safe" spaces on campus. Now, students demand that certain speakers are not even allowed to present on campus. The last bastion of open discussion is Firehouse. We need that wide open space where anything can be discussed.

To balance these competing interests, I believe that we need to take the spotlight off of Hospitality and Firehouse in order for them to continue to be who/what they are. There are good people in both groups. Some of the most caring and supportive members of Mensa belong to these groups and help out those in need. By removing the phrase "American Mensa" from the names of the two Facebook groups and by no longer promoting them as "the" face of Mensa, I believe that the spotlight is removed.

By these two groups becoming Special Interest Groups within American Mensa, they can continue to exist as they have been. In fact, this gives them greater autonomy and self-governance. They are still official Mensa groups just as all SIGs are official Mensa groups. Membership in these two groups can be promoted on a more personal level. In our Local Groups, when we meet somebody who is a good fit for Firehouse or a good fit for Hospitality, we can personally encourage them to join the group. This may not totally eliminate members who are ill-suited to either of these groups from stumbling in but those situations should be greatly reduced when most who join these two Facebook groups are by personal invitations to "check out our family".

I read many of the emails and Facebook comments from all viewpoints prior to the July 11 vote. I will continue to listen to what you have to say. Have a wonderful month!

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[Let's Get Going](#)

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Northern Michigan Mensa

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Traverse City, MI 49696

