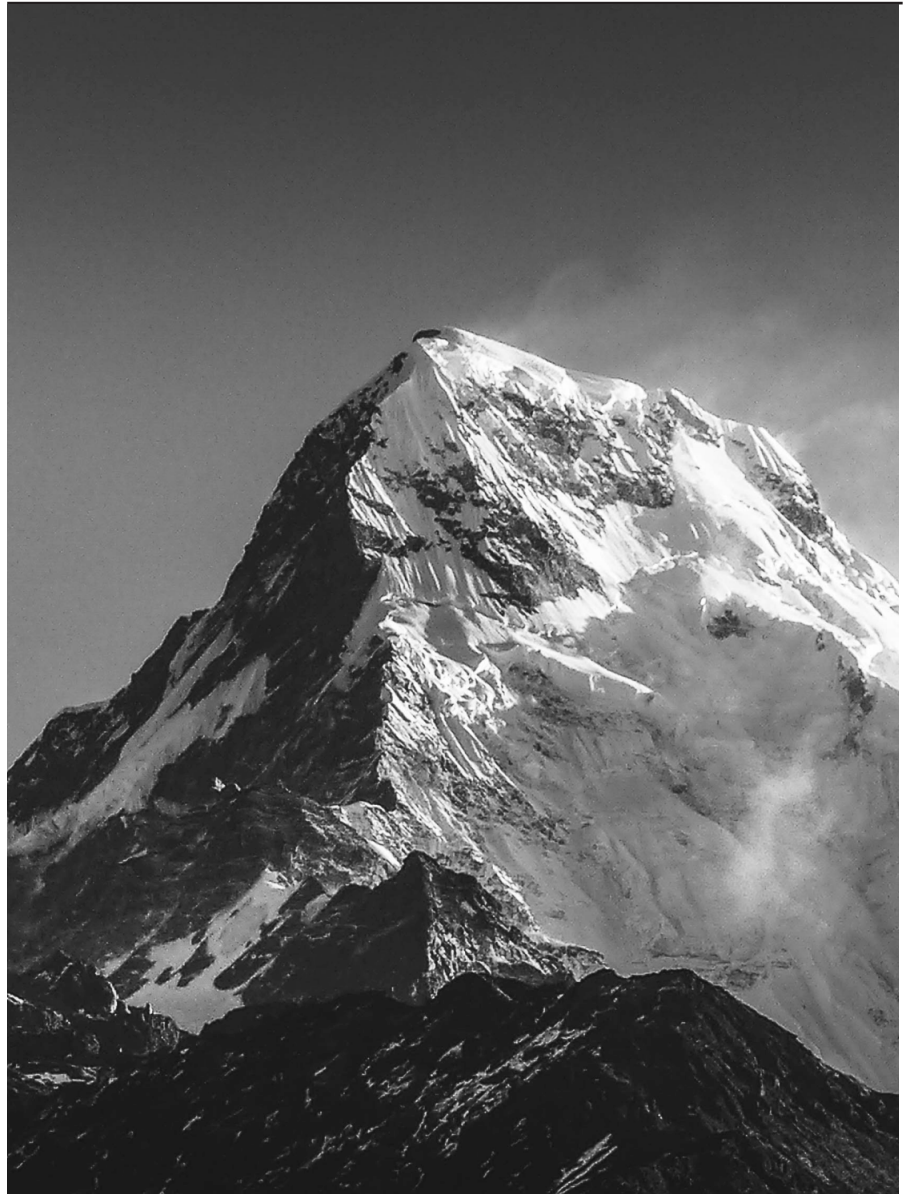




Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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March 2023



Borealis

Northern Michigan Mensa

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Borealis, the newsletter of Northern Michigan Mensa (Region 3, Group 496), is published under the auspices of its Executive Committee.

The newsletter contains mandatory items; the rest of the content 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. Bad jokes are allowed. Northern Michigan Mensa recognizes that the newsletter is addressed to both minors and adults; material printed will be appropriate for distribution to minors.

All matters submitted to the editor shall be subject to editing for content, style, and space limitations, except that if a person submits material with a restriction that it be published "as is or not at all." That a person has written and submitted something to the newsletter is not, in itself, sufficient reason for its publication.

Submissions are welcome! Members of Northern Michigan Mensa may send their original writing submissions to Borealis.

Please do not send the work of others unless such submissions include permission and release of copyright from the author.

Writing:

1. Writing you submit may be edited for length and clarity, but not content. This is the default editorial assumption.
2. If you don't want your work to be edited at all, you may submit it for publication "as is or not at all." It will not be edited in any way. If published, a note will indicate that it is wholly the work of the author.
3. You may also submit work that is rough and needs major editing. If you have written something but don't have time to polish and edit it, you can still submit it and, at your request, we will give it extra help.

All writing and letters may be submitted by email as an attachment or as the message body itself. Typed pages and letters can be mailed.

Photographs:

Photographs and other artwork can be submitted via email in JPEG, PNG, GIF, WEBP, or other standard formats. Flat art or photographs can also be physically mailed, but please do not send originals. Please label each piece submitted with your name and address.

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Northern Michigan Mensa Calendar

Executive Committee (ExComm)

Tuesday, March 7, 2023, 11:00

We meet via Zoom, all NMMs welcome to attend, contact Leo Hesting for a Zoom invitation.

Bibliomensans in-between chat

Wednesday, March 1, 6:30 PM

In between our book discussions we get together for a chat. Often it's as enjoyable as the book discussions, and, there's no homework or required reading! All NMMs welcome to join in. No commitment, give us a try. Contact Sherry McNamara for meeting details.

Regional Gathering 2023: DAMNations #34

March 24-26 - Dayton Area Mensa (DAM)

DoubleTree Suites at Cincinnati-Blue Ash

6300 E Kemper Rd.

Sharonville, Ohio 45241

(513) 489-3636

<https://sites.google.com/view/daytonrg/Schedule>

http://www.dayton.us.mensa.org/index_files/rg.html

- or -

DAYTON AREA MENSA

459 East Rahn Road

Dayton, Ohio 45429

Mensa "Theodore Talk"

The Societal Foundations of National Competitiveness

Dr. Michael Mazarr, Senior Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation, applies the seven leading characteristics that affect national standing to the U.S. and creates a snapshot of where the country stands. There are reasons for optimism, but multiple trends are working to weaken traditional U.S. advantages.

Register at tinyurl.com/mvwuppjj - see also the January 2023 issue of Mensa Bulletin, page 27



From the Editor

Don't forget your deadlines, folks. Last month I forgot my deadline and you did not see my column in the newsletter. This month (February) I thought about writing it on the fifth but forgot the thought when it counted: On the fifth. So tonight, the fifteenth, is when I am writing. The deadline is the fifteenth. My 'A Holiday a Day' calendar says it's Gumdrop Day. It also says it's "National Flag Day of Canada Day". Mark the date on your calendars!

What have you all been up to this month? I've attended a few Zoom events, missed a few others, and watched a fair amount of TV. I love 'Law and Order'. The original one started when I was in college, when nobody had a TV, so I didn't watch exactly from the beginning, but I liked it when I started watching it sometime in the mid-to-late 1990s. I started watching 'Law and Order: Special Victims Unit' when it spun off from the original, and added 'Law and Order: Organized Crime' when it came along - and because I'd missed Christopher Meloni when he left SVU.

There's something refreshing about having storylines wrapped up in an hour, when we all know that court cases and tragedies take ages to put together, to live through, and to survive. I say that as somebody who has never had to go to court, other than traffic court: I made a right turn on red, at an intersection I'd used my whole life, but apparently after I moved away from suburban Detroit that intersection was made 'no right on red'. So I went to traffic court. More in the next issue!

From the Regional Vice Chair

"The key to change is to let go of fear" - Roseanne Cash

During the month of January, I was on medical leave from work due to surgery. (I'm OK now). During this time my workplace went through 3 major changes: a new CEO, a construction issue that will put back the opening of our new building by an entire year, and a transition from Google platforms to Microsoft that did not go smoothly. You can imagine how my first day back went.

I had just under 5k unread emails in my inbox. I'd previously only spent a few hours with my new boss, and it was really hard to start figuring out what types of changes she was going to want to make in the areas that fall into my supervision and what had already happened in my absence. The IT guy who was handling the transition with the outside vendor reports to me, and he was so stressed that he had literally shaved his head. My most understaffed department hadn't hired a single person, despite having dozens of candidates sent to them. And my "new" laptop has been with the vendor since early November, and is still not available.

I tell you this not so you to pity me, but because change is hard. My 2nd day was much easier because I had a chance to digest, prioritize, and take a deep breath.

It became clear that most of the initial breakdowns I was seeing were not because of incompetence, but plain old communications and learning curves. One staff was getting really frustrated because he was communicating things the way HE would want to be told, without taking into account a difference in knowledge base. Another was reacting entirely out of fear of an unknown, but was too ashamed to admit they didn't know a thing. A lot of plans were made based on one set of assumptions, and WHOOPS something else is happening, and 15 paragraph explanation emails somehow didn't help everyone's state of mind.

This is an extreme example of it, but emotions get tied to managing change. Change happens in Mensa too. I'm not talking necessarily these big scale things, although they can and do happen, but anything that takes us out of our comfort zones can create an emotional reaction. Every new process, communication tool, new leader, new volunteer signals change. As the gifted 2% we are able to make connections between things faster and easier than most people, and so our ability to adapt can be a superpower, if we are willing to use it and then to communicate to others in a way that they will get it, instead of the way we process it.

Speaking of change—Dayton Mensa has had to make a last minute location change for their March 24-26 RG from Miamisburg OH to Sharonville OH. Kudos to them for their flexibility to continue to offer a great event. And SEM-Mantics at will be held virtually Saturday April 15th to increase accessibility to members. Much more fun than doing taxes!

~Lora Mitchell, Regional Vice Chair 3
RVC3@us.mensa.org

Happy March Birthday!

Sherry McNamara

30-March

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of continuous Membership)

- 2 years Sandra Belyea
- 10 years Alexandra Osetek
- 15 years Bernard Hanchett
- 18 years Kenneth Louis
- 21 years Mary Shaw
- 21 years Sherry McNamara
- 22 years Charles Fricke
- 36 years Harold Smith
- 40 years James Rogers

No new members this month.

Contact Jim McDermott for more information, or to help.

March cryptogram:

YOZTFOV BJHF XFZCTOFX DFZYAUF

TV IYX Y UFOYVF,

OJN NIYV'U PJTOP

VJ IYQQFO VJ AU NTVI DJVI Y IJAUF

YOX Y UFOYVF?

- NTCC BJPFBU

Cryptogram hint: You might find a substitute
TV set.

Whither the organization?

Organizations are dying. In fraternal clubs, organized religion, township government, bowling leagues - participation plummets. In Mensa itself we see membership decline as chapters struggle to fulfill volunteer/leadership roles and stay in existence. Anecdotally, the recent RG in Pittsburgh was “smaller and the attendees were old.” People nowadays find other ways to satisfy their needs.

Since any organization, to continue to exist, must recruit and include younger members, this is a challenge, or even an existential question: Can Northern Michigan Mensa continue to exist? Should we? Can we provide anything that draws (and keeps) a young cohort? Convince or entice people to work? Maybe any such efforts are a vain attempt to shovel back the tide. Maybe smart young people don't need Mensa; maybe they are well-served by other entities.

We lack the funds to hire a company to do a PR and/or research campaign, identifying the Northern Michigan population's demographics and interests, suggesting strategies. And in any csse such firms all tend to paint a similar picture, to wit: 1) here are the data, 2) there are both challenges and bright spots, and 3) we can (for an additional fee) help you with this.

Instead, we could just try it and see. Perhaps we can:

- 1) successfully recruit,
- 2) figure out a way to satisfy needs that nnn, and
- 3) maybe, while we're at it, do some good.

That last point comes from an NMM who said they wanted Mensa to be “more than just a social club for smart people.” Personally I like the social aspect, but I see the point: some people feel like they'd like to be part of something they can “really get behind.”

One path forward

Most Mensans qualified for membership with non-Mensa results such as old SAT or GRE scores. But a portion of the population hasn't taken one of those tests. A first step in involving them could be to offer Mensa tests that they can get to. As another NMM

commented, anyone in northern Michigan currently interested in taking a Mensa test, has to go down to Ann Arbor. Not so optimal.

To administer Mensa tests we would need Mensa proctors. The process for becoming a proctor is fairly detailed. It isn't daunting (at least not in my view) but neither is it a snap. Summarizing and adapting from the American Mensa web site, one needs:

- At least a four-year (bachelor's) degree.
- Written endorsement from our Local Secretary, an Executive Board member, or our RVC, Lora Mitchell.
- Experience or training with administering standardized, timed tests. This requirement may be met in one of two ways:
 - a. Teachers, psychologists, psychometricians, personnel specialists, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, etc. who already have relevant experience need to administer a Mensa test under observation.
 - b. Others may train by observing two Mensa tests and then administering two more.

All the above under the supervision of current Mensa proctors.

More details are available from the Mensa web site:

www.us.mensa.org/lead/certifications/proctors/

Beyond those details, getting our own proctors would involve a conversation. Some things don't fit into a short written article; certain observations, concerns, challenges, suggestions, hesitations, conflicts, and opinions, don't really work so well in print format.

From NMMs and Ms in general I commonly hear that we have all “been that kid”: kind of an outsider, kind of misunderstood, whose needs aren't served - ot even addressed - by available resources. As a member of the MAGC (see LocSec articles from 2022 *Borealis* issues) I find that dedicated, competent people currently working in the field (typically in the school system) want to serve the needs of such young people, but lack resources and need allies.

Maybe this is an area in which we can “do well by doing good,” maybe not. I hope to talk with you who may be interested, and see.

Desert Lullaby

by Alexandra Osetek

A million stars' brilliance
Shatters the blackness of night,
Whispering the way North;
Lonely lullabies blanket my sleep.

I awake on the moon.
How strange,
To wake a world away,
An endless expanse of rock and dust and gray.

A muted, lifeless landscape
barren, absolute, void.
Dryness soaks deep into my bones,
Dust settles in my soul.

Rugged, parched earth speeds by,
Eyes exhausted
From sights never before seen,
Shrink slowly closed, eyelids kissing.

And as the stars' silent songs
Lap gently at my ears
I wonder
In what world I next will wake.

Elected Members

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At-Large Seeking volunteer

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Check out our website: www.nmm.us.mensa.org

On the cover: Annapurna
by NMM member Alexandra Osetek