



Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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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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Bibliomensans

[Note: during the recent ExComm meeting it was suggested that the Bibliomensans - currently our most active group - deserves a monthly page of its own. This is our first attempt.]

Bibliomensans met on June 3, 2023 and discussed the book *The Greatest Evil is War* by Chris Hedges who is or was (could you guess?) a war correspondent. John Porter presented the book, others chimed in, Leo Hesting was out on a nature walk in the Ludington State Park but managed to participate when he got a signal. Other Bibliomensans were more responsible, giving the discussion their undivided attention.

Hedges' basic message is pretty simple and echoes (General William Tecumseh) Sherman's "War is hell." He doesn't hesitate to write stridently for effect. Not all Bibliomensans appreciated the effort - there wasn't consensus on whether we'd recommend the book or not. Unfortunately, some of the best passages in the book, were quotes from other works.

However, Hedges, possessing the authority that comes from having "been there and done that", makes a very good point: certain political types who say things like "War is a tool which may be used to further political policy" are badly off base. War's so horrific, that one should never consider it anything but sheer evil.

This is a recent book and Hedges - not one to hedge - makes clear his opinion regarding the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. He says, it was very well known to all, back in the 1990s, that if the West pushed Russia too hard - in Russia's view, encroaching on it or encircling it - Russia would respond by going to war. Yet Hedges still places the blame on Russia, for, though we (in the West) did what we did, it was Russia that made the choice to pull the trigger.

The discussion of the book was at least as enlightening as the book itself - Bibliomensans are a very good group. Check out our next book, *When Evil Came to Good Hart* by Mardi Link, or meet with us July 5 (see announcements).



Announcements

An Afternoon (and evening) at Interlochen Friday, July 21, beginning at noon

Meet for an informal get-together, tour of, and visit to the Interlochen Arts Camp. Join Leo Hesting and other Mensans (“plus-ones” are also welcome) for an enjoyable and interesting tour. The campus is very walkable; much of it’s accessible also. Leo will guide the tour and there’s a lot to see, including art & scenery.

The best part of the camp is just observing the campers and camp life. However there are performance events that day, including:

- Young Actors Workshop Presentation at 3:00 PM (free)
- High School Piano Honors Recital at 4:00 (free)
- Dinner, Stone Cafeteria 5:00 (reasonably priced good food)
- Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder w/special guest Jack Schneider (tickets run around \$50; this is of course optional)

There’ll be plenty of other things to do as well; if something else strikes your fancy, go ahead and enjoy that. Basically this will be a fun, informal, and flexible tour, visit, and get-together.

Contact Leo Hesting or leave a message at the new message #.

Southern Michigan Area Gathering (Meet-In-The-Middle)

Would you like to meet more Mensans? Circle July 26 on your calendar & come to Brighton for our annual Meet-In-The Middle event midway between metro Detroit, Flint/Tri-Cities, Lansing & Ann Arbor area Mensas.

We will be at Block Brewing which offers great craft brews, including non-alcoholic root beer. Their food offerings include pizzas, salads, fish, burgers and a nice selection of vegetarian options; dry rubbed and smoked in-house meats, award winning sauces, hand-cut fries, and

Announcements

house-made cornbread. Check out their menu online at BlockBrewing.com/Brighton.

We’ll have an outdoor courtyard if the weather’s nice.

Block Brewing Company

1840 South Old US 23

Brighton, MI 48814

810.206.3990

Contact:

Jean/Ed Becker, 810.229.2113 jeankbecker@icloud.com

Ann Garvin, 734.663.4075 agarvin224@aol.com

James Draper, 810.624.1791 paradyme4@comcast.net

Bibliomensans

This month we’ll meet via Zoom on July 5th at 6:30 PM. Contact Sherry McNamara for invitation and Zoom link.

This is an “in-between” month in which we have no book or reading assignment - instead we discuss connections between prior books, movies, and general topics.

NMM Events Coordinator Needed

Would you like to see more meet-up options and events like these? Besides having fun, you can help boost membership and help revitalize NMM and Mensa both. It doesn’t take a lot of work; it’s enough to just find some folks who’ll welcome Mensans to come along on something they’d be doing anyway. Contact Leo Hesting or Jim McDermott if you can help.

How Mensa Events Are Different

Generally, Mensans seem to me much like other folks. I could be wrong - I've only been a Mensan a couple of years - but Mensans' personalities, ethics, world views, habits, et cetera, seem to cover a range more or less similar to the general population's.

But now that NMM get-togethers have resumed, I've noticed some differences: not in the people themselves, but in the meetings.

For example, Mensans go out for pizza just like everyone else. But when the cook burns the pizza, the Mensan said "You'd think that since there's 'Pizza' mentioned on every sign and advertisement, they'd have better control over the process." I think a non-Mensan might instead say "You'd think they'd be better at making pizza." Both statements have their place and their value; one's not a "better" or "higher" statement than the other. Just different.

Another example. When examining a fairly large personal library, I've often heard non-Mensans say "Boy, that's a lot of books - I wonder if she's read them all?" But recently Mensans faced with such a library, examined it, discerning the patterns of the library owner's interests, speculating about the owners' personality, background and demographics; also perusing volumes of interest.

One Mensan checking out a book about Heidegger and linguistics found that it wasn't so much about language but rather the fad for linguistics among philosophers back in Heidegger's day, and how that affected his eventual development of his own philosophy. Back went the book onto the shelf.

Or, during a Mensan Bible Study, when the conversation veered off to Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, and Father Zossima, nobody figured it was remarkable that the conversation took this turn.

In all these cases, Mensans were enjoying and doing the same things that non-Mensans would; and in much the same way. But there was just that little wrinkle; that little difference. So little that if I had to prove that the difference existed, I'd have a hard time doing it. But I think I'm right.

A Mensa promotional flyers says "When I chat with a Mensan, I know I'm going to have an intelligent conversation." That may or may not be true in every case and in actual practice; I for one say and do dumb things. Just ask the participants in groups I belong to! Still, as I meet up with and get to know other Mensans, it does appear to me, there's that little wrinkle - that "sometimes, somewhat small" difference. Good for us who partipate; and good for Mensa, too, since part of the reason the organiation exists, is the social aspect.

I'm enjoying it and I hope you do and will, too.

Three Legs of Revitalization

Like other organizations, NMM took a hit in membership during the COVID pandemic. Also like others, including Mensa itself, we are looking for ways to recover, or "revitalize". Certain aspects kind of resemble trying to claw our way out of a hole - for example certifying proctors. To do it you need proctors to certify the new/wannabe proctors, but we have none. Slowly we work at it and other component tasks, with an eye toward eventual success.

The big picture of revitalization is probably fairly obvious:

1. Recruiting. Any organization must bring in new members, who must be younger than current members else the organization will simply, and inevitably, "age out and die." An intake of some 10% per year, is generally about right. Since current membership is down we should really bring in more than that.
2. Retaining. NMMs - again like members of many other organizations - seem to be split into two camps: some like the socialization, others say "I don't want it to be just a social club for smart people." We need to offer at least something for both.
3. Clawing back. Some portion of Mensans who leave, might be doing so for reasons other than "I'm done with this." We might be able to induce them to come back. For example NMM has a "friends" program to help folks temporarily short on cash. See the membership page (page 8) for details.

Kamp Kairphree

A summer camp empowering girls and young women in Michigan, 1922-1939

On Sunday, June 25 and Monday, June 26, NMMs and others enjoyed celebrating the 100th anniversary of the start of construction of the main building of Kamp Kairphree, the remains (largely a stone chimney) of which are located in what is now the Besser Natural Area near Presque Isle. John Porter, NMM, local expert, & amateur historian, took the group to the site and explained what may be seen nowadays, and the history of the camp. John's written a book on the subject, based on a lot of research, so he was able to recount a lot.

Kamp Kairphree (the wacky spelling, fashionable at the time, changed before and during the camp's lifetime) was formed partly as a destination for girls and young women from the Ann Arbor area, though in the end, they came from all over the region of Michigan and surrounding states. This founding was not only part of "first-wave feminism" but also a movement popular a century ago, to get youngsters out camping. Therefore the reasons included both self-reliance, good air and clean, healthy living, but also, developing these girls and young women, into the competent, confident "women of tomorrow." In many cases the effort worked - many of the campers went on to high-achieving, honorable and honored careers.

Then as now there was a tension in what constituted the best program of study for girls, which mirrored the question "what should a girl or woman be like?" There were



two schools of thought. The Girl Scouts, more or less following the Boy Scouts, took the tack of encouraging and teaching girls to do "all the same things as the boys." Some said, they attempted to make girls into boys.

Other camping organizations, like the Campfire Girls, took a different view. "Let girls be girls and women be women" was the idea; which in practice meant more time spent on "feminine" things or, simply "things girls like to do and are good at." Kamp Kairphree was more like this, offering not only camping but theatrical events etc.

It was a fun visit and a good learning experience.

This was the first of our intended regional get-togethers; with the intent that they won't all be in the Traverse City area. Look for upcoming events in Ludington, St. Ignace, and/or wherever NMMs live and/or care to meet up. And please, suggest and lead one! See page 3 for more information.

Happy July Birthday!

Leo Hesting	9-July
Heather Hollick	28-July

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of continuous Membership)

Olivia Marie Hill	3
Michael Stark	4
Richard Warden	19
Gene Fry	40

Lapsed Members

Some ex-NMMs whose membership lapsed in the past few years:

Kenneth Bazzett
Joseph Bose
Gary Cools
Kendall Kindzierski
Cindy Lipka
Mary K Monteith
Michael Parsons
Sara Quigley
Thomas Rasmussen

Do you know any of them? Can you reach out to them? It doesn't have to be a chore. Mensa's Lapsed Member Contact Progra runs until July 31. If you would like to help with this, contact Jim McDermott (Membership) or Leo Hesting (LocSec). Really, it can be as simple as a phone call.

This is one of the three initiatives which could revitalize NMM and Mensa itself. (The other two: recruiting, and exciting/serving current members.)

Elected Members

Local Secretary	Leo Hesting	231-465-5111	leo@us10.org
Deputy LocSec	Heather Hollick	919-360-1532	heather@heatherhollick.com
Treasurer	John Porter	231-499-9662	porterjm17@gmail.com
At-Large	Jaeger Griswold	313-690-4867	jaegergriz@peoplepc.com
At-Large	Seeking volunteer		

Appointed Members

Membership	Jim McDermott	231-943-7792	jhmcdermott@yahoo.com
Ombudsman	Josh Ockert	231-288-0125	lee.ockert@gmail.com
Scholarship	Seeking volunteer		
SIGHT	Melissa Rennie	231-889-4198	renmeij@yahoo.com
Financial Overseer	Sherry McNamara	231-313-2769	sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com
Bibliomensans	Sherry McNamara	231-313-2769	sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editor	H. Gruenberg-Seger	231-932-9501	britajax@gmail.com
Graphics Editor	- Seeking volunteers		
Program Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Publications Officer Pro Tempore	- Leo Hesting		
Website & Communications Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Testing Coordinator, Proctor, Proctor Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Regional Vice Chair	Lora Mitchell	614-450-0170	rvc3@us.mensa.org

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

NMM general message #: (231) 480-1488

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