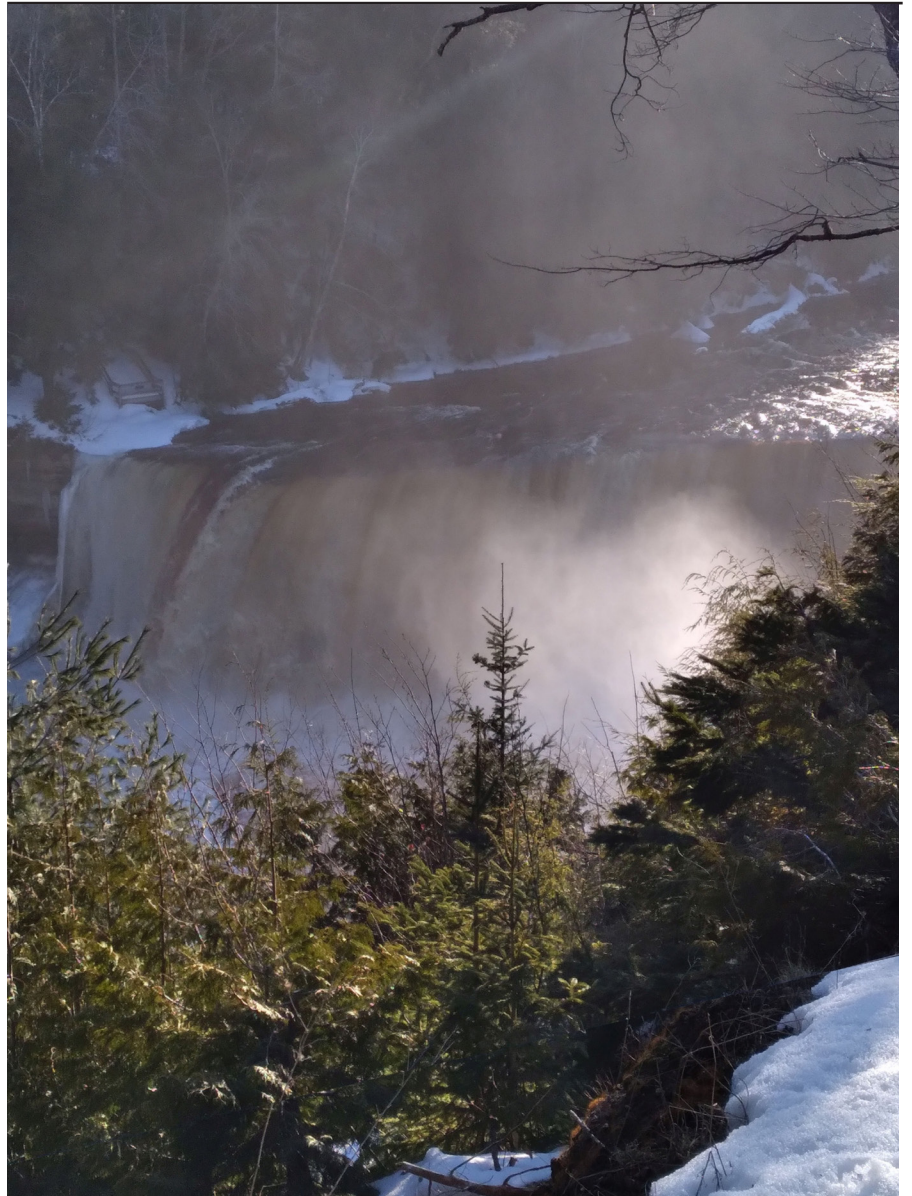


Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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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.

Email: britajax@gmail.com

US mail:

Borealis
Heather Gruenberg-Seger
928 Kelley Street
Traverse City, MI 49686-3418

Announcements

Bibliomensans

Saturday, October 7 - 11:00 AM

Book: *The Boys from Biloxi: A Legal Thriller* by John Grisham

Join us for our discussion, which will begin with a presentation by Heather Gruenberg-Seger.

The Boys from Biloxi is a legal thriller written by John Grisham. Published in 2022, it tells the story of two men who are pitted against one another, as one runs a criminal enterprise and the other prosecutes crime as district attorney. An international best-selling author, Grisham worked as a lawyer for nearly a decade before becoming an author. His expertise informs the novel's descriptions of legal processes and its exploration of legality versus morality.

Nominating Committee

As of this writing/press time, the suggested dates for the meeting of the Nominating Committee were to be:

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 (First meeting)

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 (Set candidate slate & report)

However, these dates were set well over a year ago, and are tentative. And of course by the time you read this, one or both of them may have passed. Don't worry! The Nominating Committee itself will set and announce dates.

The function of the Nominating Committee is to come up with a slate of 5 ExComm candidates for the 2024-2025 term. Let an ExComm member know if you'd like to participate.

Ideally our bylaws suggest finding 5 suitable candidates for the 5 positions: LocSec, Deputy LocSec, Treasurer, and two unnamed/untitled committee members. If the Nominating Committee is able to assemble such a slate and there is no objection, those candidates become the next ExComm.

I was chatting on the telephone with a Mensa family member who asked me “who’s the president now?” Not meaning the President of the U.S.A. but rather, of Northern Michigan Mensa.

I explained that Mensa uses different titles, and that I was the Local Secretary, which more or less means the same thing. I’ve heard that we use these titles ‘cause they were adopted from Great Britain, where Mensa was first founded. That’s certainly possible - I haven’t checked for myself. But when I think of the U.K. I think of other titles, like Prime Minister. Personally, and this is just a guess, I think that our titles might have been intended to downplay the roles we fill, and to imply or suggest service, rather than power. So, a “Local Secretary” sounds much more like someone who would help you get something done; not someone who’d “preside” over you, or over a body.

Personally I like the titles but they can lead to confusion.

NMM’s Executive Committee, or ExComm (more Mensa terms and abbreviations) is the group responsible for making sure the organization 1) follows the laws that apply in Michigan and the U.S.A., and 2) keeps things functioning. We are the folks who decide what goes in the newsletter, what kind of newsletter to publish, which events should occur. We also recruit volunteers, attempt to assist in efforts such as organizing events, proctoring Mensa Admission Tests (and otherwise recruit new Mensans) so that the NMM will continue to exist, and in general, be the place where the buck stops.

There are three named positions in the NMM bylaws: Treasurer, Local Secretary, and Deputy Local Secretary. The first position is the most important, though the work required is minimal. Without a complete financial reckoning, clubs become suspect or go under.

The Local Secretary and Deputy Local Secretary basically run meetings and take minutes. The other two ExComm positions go unnamed. Most importantly, all 5 ExComm members make whatever decisions need to be made for the club, ask NMMs first

for suggestions, comments, and ideas before and when making such decisions, communicate with Mensa International and American Mensa, choose and name volunteers to various non-elected roles (e.g. Communications Officer, Membership Officer).

The coming two years will be a make-or-break - or you could say “live or die” - term for the new ExComm and for NMM generally. Mensa, like nearly all membership organizations, is shrinking and aging. Here in our region 3 (basically the Ohio River basin/valley and parts of the Midwest), chapters like our have been folded up; either just closed down, and/or combined with neighboring chapters. That is not necessarily in the cards for NMM at this time - we do have opportunities for and avenues toward success - but it’s a real threat. The details of all of this are complicated and not possible to adequately address in a newsletter column.

The new ExComm will need to make some decisions. The first will be, shall we keep going the way we’ve been going for some 20 years, or make some changes? Obviously COVID knocked out the “just keep doing things as we have been doing them all along” strategy; that was impossible. But now that things have returned to the “new normal” it would still be possible to keep going on more or less as we used to. The problem of course is that if we do that, the club will surely die. Look at the “Generations Report” on pages 4-5. You can see that the number of NMMs born after 1980 is just 11; out of 70 members. At least a couple of these don’t actually reside in northern Michigan - they’re off to college.

We have a proctor now and that creates the possibility of creating a proctor crew; that will require volunteers and coordination. With (and only with) such a crew, we may be able to recruit and rebuild our membership. This will need to be done with skill; even finesse. For if you recruit younger members, they tend to leave the area and you’re back to where you started. Also there needs to be something for them to do once they’re in. Word spreads fast if they join, and find that “there’s nothing to do” or “it’s boring” or “Mensans just fight and argue all the time.” It’s a challenge and we can use help.



Member Generations

As of: 8/30/2023 8:43:45 PM

Local Group	Generation	Female	Male	Total
Northern Michigan Mensa - 496	Greatest Generation (1901-1927)		1	1
	Silent Generation (1928-1945)	3	9	12
	Baby Boom Generation (1946-1964)	15	21	36
	Generation X (1965-1980)	5	4	9
	Millennial Generation (1981-1996)	2	3	5
	Generation Z (1997-2012)	1	5	6
	Other/NA		1	1
	Total		26	44
Total		26	44	70

NMM Communications

NMMs bylaws specify that there be a newsletter, that meeting minutes be published, and that a semiannual financial report also be published. There are some other requirements, such as election announcements, but they don't necessarily need to go in the "newsletter".

The form of the newsletter isn't specified. Historically the standard, some 20 to 30 years ago, was to print and mail newsletters. With the invention and subsequent popularity of the PDF format, it became a de facto standard to email or otherwise electronically distribute PDF documents, that looked just like print documents, and in fact would be printable. Many professionals, used to reading physically printed publications, would have their secretaries print a PDF document, for them to read.

We at NMM have been following this standard. When the new ExComm took over in 2022, one goal was to not lose, give up, or fail to produce any functionality or product that NMMs had gotten used to in previous years and/or decades. We unfortunately did lose our scholarship program, but our other two main productions, that is, the Bibliomensans book club and the *Borealis*, continue.

A certain smallish group does read the *Borealis*, owever, in discussion with NMMs, it is clear that very many do not. Many NMMs in fact are unaware that the *Borealis* even exists.

The *Borealis* was at one time a valued combination literary, photographic, and travel magazine, enjoyed by and contributed to by the general NMM community. That is no longer the case. The experiment of keeping *Borealis* going for the 2022-2023 duration, has yielded a clear result. Though some NMMs like it, this is no longer an effective way of communicating. For one thing, it's pure "push" - a print publication is one-way.

For more details of NMM usage and readership of, and opinions about, *Borealis*, contact Leo Hesting.

Meanwhile, a conversation within Mensa (both international and U.S.) and in clubs and organizations generally, has been going on for some years. Many people opine "I don't want to read that d**n thing on my cell phone" and they have a good point. Photos on a small screen can't look the same as (high-quality) photos, say on a 8" x 10" magazine cover. On the other hand, it's been 10 years or so now that everyone's primary - or in many cases, only - communication channel/device, is their smart phone. This isn't just age-related; my neighborhood association, for example, skews old, yet texting is the only form of communication that we use. The fact is, many people nowadays don't use email at all. Many others never check their mailbox. If they do it may be only at particular times when they are in the middle of a transaction, such as getting a password reset or obtaining a replacement license key.

The new ExComm will be considering whether to refashion the role of Publications Officer into a Communications Officer. That person would work with the ExComm, NMMs, and Mensa America (and the National Office) to craft a communications strategy that can actually and effectively reach and involve people. Something they're used to, something they'll accept, something that's quick and easy and free.

A simple example is the recent get-together at the Traverse City public library. No attendee found out about it from the *Borealis*, or none said that they did. Every attendee (and many who replied/responded that they could not attend) found out about it either from email for a phone call. In this case and in very many other cases, a single text message announcing the event along with a web link, probably would have served most NMMs better.

If you are interested in this topic, consider joining the ExComm, volunteering to be the next Communications Officer, or to help. But to paraphrase a famous Russian, "You may not be interested in dialog methods but they're interested in you." There is a good chance that *Borealis* as we are used to it, will be replaced by something that better fulfils necessary functions given the world as we live in it today. Ideally that will still be enjoyable!

Membership

Happy October Birthday

Robert	Atallo	6-Oct
James	Rogers Jr	19-Oct
Mark	Muniak	25-Oct
Susan	Nolff	31-Oct

Mensa Membership Milestone (Years of Continuous Membership)

Patrick	Begg	2
Julie	Frazier	8
Gary	McWhirter	25

Welcome

Lukas Esser

Welcome Back

Peter Turkus

Contact Jim McDermott for more information, or to help.

Contact Northern Michigan Mensa

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

On the cover: Tahquamenon Falls
by NMM member John Porter