



Borealis Mini

The Newsletter of Northern Michigan Mensa

A change in look

If you have been a regular reader of our monthly newsletter, *Borealis*, you will notice that this "mini" version is smaller. Our new Executive Committee will revisit the whole topic of membership communications, and decide things like periodicity, content, length, and format of publications. That decision will be a constrained choice since reality must be recognized; putting out any publication takes effort and contributions. Also there are the questions of how many Northern Michigan Mensans actually read the *Borealis*, and what kind of communication NMMs want and use.

Our bylaws specify that there be a newsletter and that we publish a semiannual financial report in it. Other rules specify duties of the editor, et cetera, but there's a lot of flexibility. For example, meeting minutes don't even need to be published (just "kept"), special meetings "shall be announced or reported in the local group newsletter (or by direct mail)," and that "[n]otice of meetings and activities" be published either in the newsletter, "or otherwise be sent to each member." Sum it all up: we have a lot of flexibility; a biannual newsletter would do.

Communications strategies and methods

In case you hadn't heard, folks aren't reading print publications, nor paying attention to emails, as they/we used to. Many younger people don't use email at all; quite a few professionals don't either, instead using tools (Slack, MS Teams, many others) tailored to their work and workplaces. Many semi-formal groups (e.g. neighborhood associations) just use texting.

Part of the work in the coming year, will be to see what kind of communication tools and methods will serve NMMs the best. If you're interested in this, let one of the ExComm members know, and/or attend the ExComm meetings. If you're really interested, consider volunteering to be a Communications Officer (like a Publication Officer but harder).

New Executive Committee (ExComm)

Our new ExComm consists of the following NMMs:

- Leo Hesting, Local Secretary or LocSec
- Thomas Irish, Deputy Local Secretary
- Richard Thibeau, Treasurer
- John Porter, at large
- Jim McDermott, at large

Technically and according to the bylaws, all those five individuals were elected at large and the first item of business of the first ExComm meeting will be for the ExComm to assign individuals to positions. However, this will (presumably) be a formality since these NMMs were recruited for specific positions, agreed to that, and there hasn't been any objection.

According to the bylaws, the ExComm is required to meet (at least) quarterly. In accordance with this, and to ensure that any interested NMM who wants to attend, here are the dates of the ExComm meetings for the 2024-2025 biennium:

- Tuesday, January 16, 2024
- Tuesday, March 12, 2024
- Tuesday, June 11, 2024
- Tuesday, September 17, 2024
- Tuesday, December 17, 2024
- Tuesday, March 11, 2025
- Tuesday, June 17, 2025
- Tuesday, September 16, 2025
- Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Currently those meetings are scheduled as Zoom meetings, at 18:30 (6:30 PM). Contact an ExComm member if you would like the Zoom invitation/meeting information.

Proctoring, testing, inviting/boosting membership

We have not had a Mensa-certified proctor for the past some years, but we do, now. This means that we have another tool in our toolkit, to help recruit new NMMs. Proctoring/scheduling the Mensa Admission Test isn't the only way (there are other ways to get into Mensa), nor is it by itself enough - Mensa in general does a better job of recruiting than retaining members. But proctoring's a good start, providing other benefits to NMM - and to the larger community - besides just getting new members into our local group. For one thing, scheduling, announcing, and holding Mensa Admissions Tests helps to get the word out.

It does take time to proctor; given our geography, travel can be involved, since not everyone in northern Michigan lives in the same town! But the proctor community in general is the liveliest, most active, most involved, and perhaps the most fun group in Mensa.

To effectively proctor we at NMM really should have a "proctor team" just to avoid overworking any individual proctor, serve as backup in case of emergency or illness, and simply to administer more tests than any one individual proctor can - or is willing to - proctor.

To make this work we also need a Testing Coordinator. Just from the title you can kind of figure what's involved. Estimating demand, announcing, monitoring who's signed up (and has paid), contacting locals who can get the word out, possibly interfacing with the media, arranging for testing space, and of course, working with the proctors. Along with proctoring, this is a really important job. Please, if you think you might be able and are interested, consider volunteering.