



Borealis Mini

The Newsletter of Northern Michigan Mensa

Greetings and updates

At this writing there is one more Mensa Admission Test (MAT) scheduled:

- November 2, 2024, 10:30 AM - Cadillac - Cadillac Wexford Public Library - Meeting Room, 411 S Lake St, Cadillac, MI 49601 (still upcoming as of this writing)

Some of October's MATs were no-shows. This is possible, not only in rural, sparsely populated areas. I was supposed to proctor an MAT in Chicago and none of the 4 scheduled candidates showed up.

Of course it's easy to get discouraged about this. But after the first test session (in Scottville) listed above, I saw how likely no-shows might be. Rather than cancel, I figured, I'll concentrate on "executing the process." By that I mean, learning to work American Mensa's testing system, finding local NMMs in the various cities, identifying allies (non-Mensans), learning the various rules and regulations of different libraries. Policies differ, I found out.

All of that succeeded, so now, I'm a (slightly) more experienced and seasoned Mensa proctor. Also I've learned a lesson, which is: folks out there aren't clamoring to become Mensans. Even with advance publicity (which we did accomplish), it's simply not the case that "If you offer it, they will come." This may seem obvious but it wasn't clear to me, before. (Some of my other testing session experience comes from my being a Michigan DNR Hunter Safety Instructor - when we schedule and announce Hunter Safety courses, people do sign up and attend.)

I repeat that I remain optimistic about proctoring MATs, but, clearly, demand for them must either be generated or located. I have a few ideas; if any of you have ideas or suggestions also, please let me know.

Bibliomensans (NMM Book Club)

Sherry McNamara, the leader of NMM's own book club, Borealis, recounts some of its history, and announces her "retirement" from the position of leader:

Hi everyone!

It's coming up on the 20-year anniversary of Bibliomensans. It is hard to believe that on 4 December 2004 I invited a group of interested Northern Michigan Mensans to join me at the Omelette Shoppe on Front Street to discuss the book, *Snow in August*, by Pete Hamill. I had previously read the book and asked those who were attending to read it before we met. It was also the "Traverse City Reads" book for 2004. I was really excited about being in a book discussion group having wanted to be in one for several years so I decided to create one for NMM. I was not sure if I would get any takers, or, if there would be lasting interest, but I have been certainly pleased that both those doubts were unfounded. Eleven people showed up that morning and we chose the name Bibliomensans.

Since then, I started a movie discussion group in 2005 and, of course, we now have the In Between social group. More than a few members have passed on and that is sad to recollect and think about how much insight and intelligent conversation they brought to this group. By the end of this year, since I am technically the only original member left, I could have read 122 books with this group; I do think I read all but a few. One still stands out from 2005 as the worst book we ever read and that was, *Under the Skin*, by Michael Faber. Holy smokes, why I still

remember it, I do not know, but it stays in a little compartment in my brain. Nonetheless, we read so many really, really wonderful books that fully outweighed this one bad one.

For a time, we found a home at the Omelette Shoppe, but it soon became too loud (probably when we hit summer season) and we moved over to the Cottage Cafe where we had a private room and eventually to BC Pizza. Then so much changed in 2020 with Covid and I scrambled to switch us all over to a virtual meeting format. Meeting via Zoom, at first, probably felt pretty weird. There was definitely something to be said for the technology, but the in-person meetings with food and hanging out were much more fun!

Next year will be the beginning of a new vicennium (yeah, I had to look it up to see what it is called) and I think it is time. It is time for me to step away from organizing and running the group. If someone is willing to take this group on (and the In Between group) cool beans, if not, then my part will end with our last book in December. It has been a really wonderful experience for me.

We will miss Sherry. If anyone would like to lead Bibliomansans, please contact Sherry or any ExComm member.

Activities, socializing

One-on-one and/or simple get-togethers, such as lunch or breakfast in a restaurant, seem to still be favorites. Nothing too formal, elaborate, or organized. Perhaps we can turn some of these into regular events.

If you have suggestions, or want to issue an invitation, contact an ExComm member. We'll publish your suggestion/invitation and help get the word out.

Borealis submissions/contributions

During the years 2022 and 2023, NMMs contributed articles, photos, and other material, which was published in *Borealis*. The contributions dwindled with time, but they are still as welcome as ever! Send yours in.

Communications Officer solicited

NMM isn't the only Mensa local group that has found, that a newsletter that is formatted in PDF and then:

- printed and mailed,
- emailed,
- posted on the NMM website, and
- posted on the American Mensa website

generally goes unread and/or unopened. (During the years 2022 and 2023 we discovered that readership was nearly nil outside a few core NMMs.)

It's part of our bylaws that we need to publish a newsletter, so we must, until and unless American Mensa changes the minimum bylaws. But besides compliance with a national standard, the question of effective communication to/with NMMs remains. We all know that other technologies dominate the communication landscape nowadays. Technologies such as texting, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, iMessage. Or even TikTok, Telegram, and others. These are especially popular, if not dominant, among "the younger set."

A Communication Officer would take on the responsibility of identifying new, effective, and appropriate communication technologies, and also, NMM members' and prospective members' preferences. The job would not be full-time but a reassessment would need to be done every 6 months to a year. Communication and collaboration with the ExComm would be part of the job.

If any NMM is interested in taking on this vital job, please let an ExComm member know.