



# Borealis Mini

## *The Newsletter of Northern Michigan Mensa*

Though crisp fall weather is already here, vacations are still planned, tourists and family visiting, Labor Day's coming up. I hope that you are enjoying the "5 months of paradise" we're blessed with.

Along with fall come Mensa membership promotions. In September, American Mensa accepts new members providing "prior evidence" (typically, I.Q. and equivalent tests administered elsewhere), without the usual administrative fee. Just send in the evidence and if it's cricket/kosher, you're in.

Then, come October, it's another promotion - 50% off the cost of the Mensa Admission Test. In recent years this has been "no news" - not relevant. Not this year! Now that NMM has an actual, certified proctor (me) we are ready to go. I would like to schedule and administer one Mensa Admission Test near each of the following 5 areas:

- Muskegon
- Ludington
- Traverse City
- Petoskey
- Upper Peninsula - St. Ignace or "the Soo" - Sault Ste. Marie.

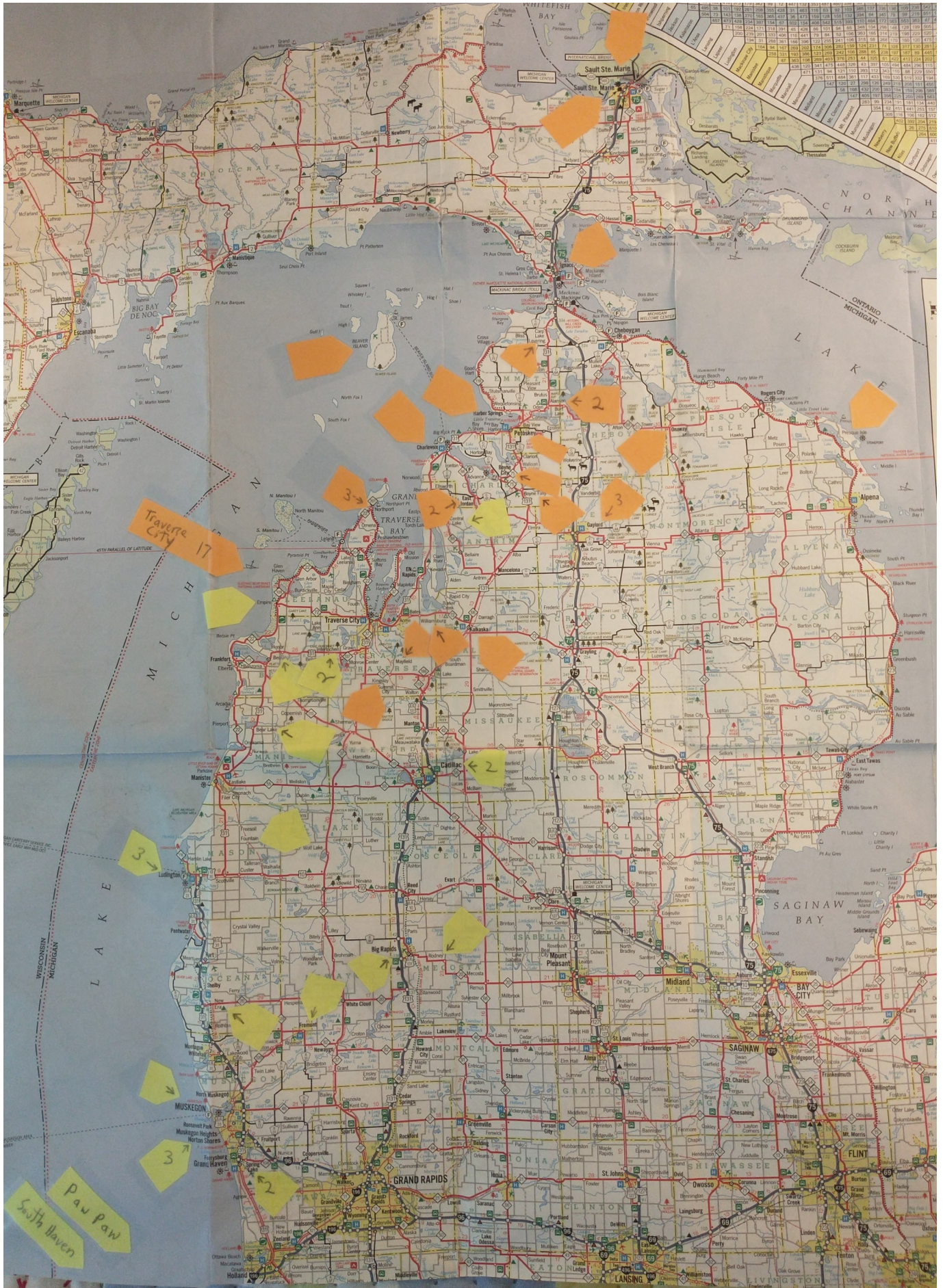
That is kind of ambitious, but possible. If we as a club can accomplish this, we could schedule a test session for each Saturday in October (4th, 11th, 18th, 25th) augmented by, say, a test on Halloween.

But I'm not going to do this alone. For this to work I will want a local NMM partner, one from each of the above regions. That person's mission, should they choose to accept it, will be to:

1. Get the word out. Contact local press, get a newspaper article placed. Agree to be interviewed if this is possible. Also use other forms of communication, such as Facebook & other social media, placing simple announcements/signs in libraries. The minimum age for the test is 14 - so there could be some involvement with high schools, National Honor Society adult sponsors, etc. A lot of this will depend on you - how much you want to work, whom you think you should involve.
2. Find and reserve a good testing location, e.g. church basement, library meeting room.
3. Be the local contact person, who potential/interested candidates may contact.
4. Assist me on the day of the test. A single person can proctor a test alone but it is better and safer to have two people on hand. Test candidates can show up late, other things can arise.

If you've ever "run anything" you get the idea. I estimate that the total time I need to ask you for, will be some 8 hours, more or less. Of course I will be partnering with you and can be your backup for whatever you need. I will attempt to solicit each NMM, soon, so expect to hear from me via email and/or telephone. If you don't want me to bug you for help, just let me know - an email will do.





Traverse City 17

Paw Paw  
South Haven

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## **Treasure report**

As of June 30, 2024, NMM has a total of \$5,517.16 in checking, savings, and a CD. We have a scholarship fund balance of \$600.00 with the Mensa Foundation. The most recent expense was \$68.00 for stamps, back in May. We pay approx. \$150/p.a. for a Zoom account for Bibliomensans.

## **Reinventing/Revitalizing Mensa and NMM**

As your LocSec, I have involved myself in a weekly online (Zoom) meeting held every Sunday (at 9:00 PM!). It's a "brainstorming" session with one topic: how to rebuild and revitalize Mensa. Like all membership organizations, Mensa is both aging and shrinking. However that is not the case everywhere: "best practices" exist and Mensans are helpful and willing to share. I've learned a lot, for example, Mensa actually does a pretty decent job of recruiting folks in their 20s. Or, the value of having a strategic plan. Even though we in NMM are one of the smallest local groups, this is not beyond us. A typical strategic plan includes 4 pillars:

1. Reaching out to potential new members.
2. Engage and retain existing members.
3. Public service.
4. Running the chapter (local group) well.

One challenge: people, to some extent, prefer and enjoy to socialize with others of about their own age. Yes, cross-generational friendships are possible and enjoyable. No, you don't want "ageism" or need a separate club. But it's good to be aware of potential members' needs and preferences. The problem with catering to this one: there aren't many people in this age range, in our club. A possible solution: partner with other small local groups for long-distance meetings, "hangouts". There are a lot of possibilities, some of them exciting. Mensa already has some tools in its toolkit, that we can take advantage of, e.g. SIGs (Special Interest Groups) and the Young Mensan program.

## **What kind of club?**

Mensa has three main purposes:

- to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity;
- to encourage research into the nature, characteristics, and uses of intelligence;
- to provide a stimulating intellectual and social environment for its members.

When I talk with NMMs I find a somewhat different breakdown of desires and vision:

- "I don't want to just belong to a social club for smart people - I want to do more, help others."
- "I'm just fine with the idea of belonging to a social club for smart people, it's what I like."
- Folks who got their Mensa membership card for the bragging rights and don't want more, don't want to participate at all. And/or they're too busy, have other higher priorities, etc.

I personally greatly enjoy socializing with Mensans, within Mensa. But I also see a role Mensans can play to really help out in our community. By "our community" I don't mean just our cities and towns; I refer instead to the (only partially visible) community of smart folk. Especially, smart children and teens can greatly benefit from just a little contact with someone who's on their level. I am going to begin involving myself in such an effort - in fact I'll be forming an exploratory committee soon. It won't be a Mensa effort (we need more help than our small local group can provide) but there will be a big role or opportunity, for Mensans. I'll explain more when I contact you all personally; also of course I'll be soliciting your own opinions, getting ideas you may have.

## **Activities, socializing**

Last year's "piggyback" meeting at the Traverse Area District Library, East Bay Branch, Annual Ice Cream Social, was an enjoyable success. NMMs met and our Regional Vice Chair at the time also dropped in to meet us. We had a good time. This year's event will be on Saturday, September 14, 2024 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm. I myself will be out of state, darn it. But those NMMs in the Traverse City area may choose to repeat; maybe we can make it an annual event. I sure hope so; it was easy and fun. You just show up with some way to identify the NMM group (I used an unobtrusive flag). Let's not forget how simple and enjoyable it can be to just meet up for a lunch or dinner at a local, ideally inexpensive, restaurant. Remember my list of regions from the first page of this letter? 2 of those 5, have Olive Garden restaurants. I bet that NMMs from the other 3 regions know of good meet-greet-and-eat places. I personally will be inviting you and myself out to lunch or dinner, just to get to know you fellow NMMs. It can be very simple, informal, convenient.

## **Communications**

Once upon a time, the *Borealis* was a very enjoyable travel, literature, and photography magazine. Lately it fell onto harder times as both readership and contributions dried up. Of course if you're reading this, and if you happened to read the Summer 2024 issue, you have seen that I, in consultation with the ExComm, have turned the *Borealis* into a quarterly; our bylaws mandate either a quarterly or semiannual (it isn't completely clear) "newsletter". Of course we shall comply with our own bylaws, keeping you generally informed of finances, ExComm meetings and decisions.

But perhaps you think that maybe we should use communication tools (platforms, strategies, channels) that are more effective; if so, you're right. The ExComm will be pleased to name a Communications Officer - as opposed to the traditional Publications Officer - if and when we can hornswaggle someone into accepting the challenge, and the job. How useful would TikTok, Slack, Discord, "good old" Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram be, to NMMs? Who knows? I don't have the answer. The job will involve some trial and error, seeing what works out, what the effects are on our club. For example, if a Mensan uses TikTok, does that make them stupid? Do smart people even use that tool? Maybe a combination of print, texting, and email will be sufficient, even optimal.

I will be soliciting your opinions on this (and also sounding you out to see if you can help).

## **Scholarships**

We have not run a local scholarship program in NMM for the past couple of years. When we did run it, I was one of the judges - it was rewarding. Lately there seems to have been a big change in how the Mensa Foundation runs scholarship programs - "our" \$600 would not be awarded based on the judgments of NMMs. Instead the money goes to the top candidate from our region, as judged by the regional (or national?) panel. There's been a lot of confusion - and opposition - voiced about this.

## **ExComm**

Your Executive Committee or ExComm meets quarterly; the schedule for the rest of the year is on the NMM website. Any NMM is welcome to sit in. This past June 11 the ExComm met, caught up, reviewed finances. One decision or resolution was passed - to pay candidates' \$60 testing fee if they pass and join NMM for at least a year. If they don't pass or join, we don't reimburse.