



Borealis Mini

The Newsletter of Northern Michigan Mensa

Local News & Events

Summer is upon us and that means time for fun. Committees still meet, finances still get managed, but the humdrum of organizational maintenance kind of fades into the background as we enjoy our lovely paradise, here in northern Michigan. Practically and less metaphorically, it can be harder to get potential or candidate Mensans to sit for a pencil-and-paper test, when the outdoors is calling. So we focus on enjoyment, while planning our more serious efforts for fall and beyond.

Last year, for fun, we tried "piggybacking" - meeting at a fun public event already scheduled and run by someone else. It worked; it's easy (someone else does most of the organizing) and low-risk: if only a few NMMs attend - or even if you're the only one - you still get to enjoy the event.

Coming up, at the Traverse City Public Library East Branch - on Tuesday, June 4 2024 starting at 5:30 PM, NMMs are invited to meet for the library's monthly "adult coloring" event. If you're new to NMM and don't recognize others, look for the unobtrusive Mensa flag. If NMM attendees want, we can meet afterward for supper, a picnic, etc. The NMM contact for this event will be Leo Hesting.

Leo will also be the contact for another NMM piggyback event, 6:00 PM on Thursday, May 30 at the Stix Bar in Ludington. Join us for the weekly Stix trivia contest. See #stixtriviathursdays on Instagram, or the Ludington Chamber of Commerce website. If you knew the Stix Bar "back when" you may remember, it was a dive. No longer - the Stix has been completely modded out and is a fun venue. Come join us and see for yourself. The trivia contest is free to play.

Getting Involved

There are a lot of opportunities to get involved in Northern Michigan Mensa. Bibliomensans, our book club, meets monthly; participants read and discuss a book every two months. In between months are in-between sessions, when attendees discuss interesting and relevant topics, and just socialize, chit-chat. Any Mensan is welcome to attend. The next book will be *The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder* by David Grann: the next meeting, 11:00 AM Saturday, June 1.

Other social events include the "piggyback" drop-by meetings; others are in the works.

Mensa also has a "mission" aspect for do-gooders who want to volunteer. NMMs have judged Mensa scholarship contests, made presentations, led field trips. As with the social events, more opportunities have been and will be discussed. We will find ways to keep you posted, if that is what you'd like.

Another way to get involved is to be a contact person for a public event "piggyback" meeting. Responsibilities include being there, contacting NMMs if the event is canceled or we move, etc.

Also we may schedule more frequent and varied Zoom meetings. We're a small group compared to others, "intimate" in a way yet sparsely scattered over our northern terrain. A good chat with friends, even if it is mediated by technology - can be a real blessing, a treat, gratifying, edifying, fun.

Meetings

Regular meetings of the ExComm ("Executive Committee") occur at least quarterly. Minutes are included in the *Borealis* and on the NMM website. Other committee and working meetings are more loosely organized. Some are still getting started up, for example, proctors and proctors-in-training, membership, and reinventing Mensa. Contact any ExComm member for more information.

Regional, National, International

There is a lot going on right now in Mensa nationally and internationally; changes seem afoot and elections are wrapping up as this newsletter goes to press. Mensa America dues - along and in line with inflation - are going up. This has various effects; an obvious one is that some NMMs may be unable to afford membership. Historically NMM has had an assistance program for any limited-income NMM who cannot afford annual dues - contact an ExComm member for more information.

NMM itself is actually growing and expanding, as Western Michigan Mensa (our sister group to the south - basically centered around Grand Rapids) is being split up and reapportioned into surrounding groups, including ours. This means that NMM gains about 11 members. Strictly speaking, those members don't live in northern Michigan (roughly defined as north of US 10 and/or the Pentwater-Pinconning line), but we're glad to welcome them.

Mensa America, like other American membership organizations, continues to shrink. There is nothing inevitable about this - several countries' Mensa organizations are growing, some quite rapidly. Multiple efforts are under way to address the American decline. One is being led by Mensan Ken Lawrence - a weekly Zoom meeting he calls "brainstorming", focused on reinventing Mensa and the ways we do things. Purposes include helping navigate the ways of our operation, and providing a place where people can talk to other members of our family. There's a lot to be discussed. More information can be obtained from MBrainstormingSessions@gmail.com or at the Facebook Group M Brainstorming. Zoom meetings Sundays at 9 PM, Meeting ID 829 0860 0785, Passcode: 1234.

Notices, reports, minutes

NMMs who have read the *Borealis* in the past may notice a change in format and periodicity. *Borealis's* length and content have waxed, waned, and changed over the years. As times and people changed, readership declined, and the *Borealis* shrank. During the 2002-2004 ExComm term we grew it again, but readership and contributions declined, so we're back to a shorter format. With 90% of Americans owning smart phones, relying on a monthly printed/PDF newsletter, is no longer best.

NMM bylaws mandate either a quarterly or semiannual newsletter (it's a little murky), publication in it of financials, ExComm minutes, etc. This we will continue to do. However, an exploratory committee will be looking at changing from "publication" to "communication"; including 2-way and multiparty. It makes sense to utilize powerful, convenient communications channels now available. We won't abandon paper but we already augment it and will continue to do so.