

# 2024 BLAST! Program

*Subject to change*

Friday January 19, 2024

**NNJ French Conversation Group** – Boardroom B – 5:00 - 6:15pm

Kathleen Stein-Smith

Are you planning to travel to the Olympic Games in Paris next summer, to order a meal in French at a local French restaurant, to conduct research based on world-class research published in French, to use a second language on a regular basis to increase brain fitness, or – most importantly – to connect with a French-speaking/Francophone friend, neighbor, or family member in the langue de Molière, one of only two global languages (along with English)? If so, and if you would like to maintain or improve your French language skills, please consider joining us on Monday evenings for the weekly NNJ Mensa French conversation group online via zoom, Mondays at 7 PM.

**M-etaphysical Meet-up!** – Boardroom C – 5:00 - 6:15pm

Thomas Galanis

The M-etaphysical meetup is a place to discuss all things new age and metaphysical! A group that began during the pandemic, we now enjoy monthly Zooms on a variety of topics and are on the way to becoming an official Mensa SIG. Join us at Blast! where we will have an open discussion - paranormal, psychic, light work and more – if it falls under the general topic, we can discuss it. Come to listen, share, and support the lively discussions we are sure to have!

Curious but not too familiar with the topics? Come and learn – we are a safe and open space that is welcoming to all. If you'd like to join us for our monthly Zooms, contact Tommy at [64bitpointer@gmail.com](mailto:64bitpointer@gmail.com) and we will add you to our list!

**Happy Hour and Humorous Hats** – Dining Area – 7:30 - 9:00pm - 21+ please.

Kimberly Strickland & Ron Norris

Kimberly Lynn will be your host for this Northern NJ Mensa tradition. Bartender Ron will be mixing drinks and serving up laughs. Wear your most humorous headgear (optional but encouraged) and join us for the happiest hour (and change) at BLAST! -

**Enterprise Risk Management for Entrepreneurs** - Boardroom B – 8:15 - 9:30pm

Deb Stone

Deb has spent most of the last 40 years or so in the various fields of Insurance, Risk Management, Finance, Actuarial, Regulation, Consulting, and general pursuits. There are many risks out there for businesses, and

for entrepreneurs and small business owners just realizing what they are can be overwhelming. She will talk about the various types of risk (some insurable, but many not) and some of the ways to manage and mitigate that risk.

**Counting and measuring** - Boardroom B – 9:30 - 10:30pm

Laurie Endicott Thomas

This presentation explains the grammatical basis of number theory. It also explains how we measure things, and why some things cannot be measured. It introduces Steven's Taxonomy of Measurement, which helps you understand how to analyze different kinds of measurements.

**Wine Tasting** – Hotel Dining Area – 9:30 - 10:45pm

Alli Meyer

Join Alli as she takes you on a guided tasting of unique grape varietals you likely have not heard of, but should get to know. Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc, and Merlot all make some delicious wines. And you probably love at least one of these grapes, but we will NOT be tasting any of them. Why? Because we're Mensans and we are capable of understanding a greater spectrum of anything. To that end, we're going to explore some unique varietals that I promise will become a new favorite or remind you of a wine you already love or re-introduce you to something you tried that one time on that great trip or all of the above. Sit back, let me pour you something delicious, share some fun facts, and expand your wine palate and knowledge.

**The Eye of Argon** - Boardroom C – 10:45pm – midnight

Ian Randal Strock

Listen to the fascinating story...

**Movie night** - Boardroom B – 10:45pm – midnight+

Let's watch a movie together!

The title of the movie will be announced on site.

## Saturday January 20, 2024

**The Long and Winding Road to Cures for Cancers: Are We There Yet?** Boardroom B – 9:30 - 10:45pm

Joseph Hoffman

Various types of cancer were known to the ancients, but life-prolonging therapies, other than surgical extirpation or radiation therapy for discrete local tumors, were only first developed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Early treatments, including some still in use today, consisted of nonspecific cytotoxic therapies that killed normal tissues with high cellular turnover as well as malignant tissues, conveying high degrees of toxicity. However, serial advances in cellular and nuclear biology, pathophysiology, genetics, immunology, cell-cell signaling, radiation therapy, imaging technology and epidemiology have provided scientists with multiple tools for designing regimens that more safely and effectively intervene in the growth and dissemination of tumors. Still, success for most therapies for advanced malignancies are measured in months to years of life prolonged rather than cure rates. This talk will highlight some of the important developments in the treatment of cancers, including more recent “designer therapies” driven by breakthrough discoveries.

**Meet NNJM leadership** – Boardroom C – 9:30 - 10:45am

Franck Mounier

Meet with our NNJM Leadership Team and look at the 2023 achievements as well as the freshly brewed 2024 plan. Get to understand why our Chapter has won two Diamond awards in a row, and is in a good position to win a third. A great opportunity to see how the chapter is run and how the coordination happens. It is also a perfect time to provide your feedback, explore your potential support to the Chapter, or share your ideas.

**Mensa admission test session** – Business Center – 9:30 - 12:00pm (noon)

Richard Schaeffer, Steven Mahaney, Gaurav Nandrajog

Testing session for candidates aiming at joining our group. Please do not disturb - thank you!

Are you interested in becoming a proctor in the NNJM Chapter? Please meet with Richard.

**Learn the story, the properties and the use of one of the most necessary while hidden compound in our modern life: Graphite** – Boardroom B – 10:45am - 12:00pm (noon)

Christophe Bommier

Graphite initially takes its roots through the carbon arc rods technology that played a decisive role in the electrical revolution; its presence and use was necessary to illuminate public spaces and large department stores from the 1870s. Since then its use has been critical in the production of almost all the objects that surround us in our life and that could not exist without graphite: electricity, glass, batteries, cellphones, aluminum, cars, ... Discover the fascinating and hidden world of graphite that has made our modern life possible the way it is. C. Bommier will engage you in a journey you couldn't have suspected, that will open your eyes to some critical while unknown aspects of manufacturing.

**The Four Dimensions of Success: Lessons from the lives of 50 of history's most successful individuals** – Boardroom C – 10:45am - 12:00pm (noon)

Keith Thompson

There have been many historical and contemporary individuals who have achieved various levels of 'success' according to our societal understanding of the word. But what exactly is 'success' and how did they achieve it? What are the critical determinants of success? Join Keith for a discussion of this topic which is based on his research on the topic, and a book he's currently working on. In a future session Keith will address how individuals can engineer or mastermind their own levels of success.

**Meet the AMC (and maybe run yourself)** – Boardroom C – 1:15 - 2:30pm

Kimberly Strickland

With the 2024 national elections around the corner, some members of the current AMC will be in attendance to answer your questions in an open forum format. Thinking of getting involved, and perhaps running for office? The petition window is open throughout the month of January; you can also apply for an appointed position later in the year. Come and meet Mensa's leaders of today, and potentially of the future, in this interactive session.

**Subliminal Advertising—Real or Myth?** – Boardroom B – 1:15 - 2:30pm

Gregg Siegel

Subliminal Advertising invokes a time when the creative revolution in advertising allegedly became intertwined with 1970s pop psychology. It suggested targeting sales messages directly to the subconscious, where they would be absorbed without logical evaluation, thereby impacting consumer behavior at an entirely new level. Believers saw the word SEX hidden in ads, as well as disembodied genitals, and bizarre Jungian symbology chock full of skulls, death masks and weird animals. But was it real or merely pareidolia? And, if real, did it work? Come see some egregious examples and decide for yourself.

**Trivia!** - Dining Room - 2:30 - 4:30pm

David de Corlieu

Pub-style trivia, NNJ Mensa-style. Play on a team or go up against everyone for a chance at a year's worth of bragging rights as Blast! Trivia Champion Extraordinaire. (And enjoy some fun music too!)

**The Paradox of Effort: Unraveling the Complex Relationship Between Work and Reward**– Boardroom B – 3:00 - 4:15pm

Ken Light

We tell our children, 'if you work hard for it, it'll mean more to you,' but is that true? Work can also deter us from getting to a goal or reward. My recent work in both mice and humans points to circumstances where work can add value to a tangible reward. However, there is an extensive literature of conflicting results, indicative of a complex relationship. Understanding the circumstances and underlying mechanisms driving this set of results could prove critical to conditions such as anhedonia, depression, and schizophrenia which appear to share a common aspect of disordered valuation.

**Interesting Stories of the Law** – Boardroom B – 3:00 - 4:15pm

William Wallis

One of the most enjoyable things about studying Law is the sheer strangeness of some of the cases you'll encounter. Learn amazing stories from personal experience.

**Poker Tournament** - Business Center – 3:15 - 5:30pm

Deb Stone

Join Deb for a Texas Hold'em tournament (buy-in \$10) and show your poker prowess! Sign-up sheet will be available at the Registration desk (minimum of 6 participants required to hold the tournament)

**Demystifying Cryptocurrency: A High-Level Journey into the World of Bitcoin**– Boardroom B – 4:30 - 5:45pm

Mike Dross

This talk will be a high-level introduction to cryptocurrency, predominantly focused on Bitcoin. By the end of the session, you will gain (or deepen) an understanding of how cryptocurrency works, the advantages and drawbacks of these currencies, the potential of Bitcoin as an emerging asset class, and how to mitigate the risks of Bitcoin investing.

**Mensa and Public Service** – Boardroom C – 4:30 - 5:45pm

Laurie Thomas

Laurie will talk about the possibilities of public service projects that Mensa chapters may consider!

**Group Picture** – Dining Room – 5:45 - 6:00pm

Don't miss it! Last year's picture was published in the November-December National Bulletin.

**Presentation Karaoke** – Boardroom B – 7:30 - 8:45pm

Lisa Maxwell

Join us and test your brain at some quick thinking and storytelling. In this game, a series of volunteers will each give a brief presentation based on images/slides they have never seen, in front of a live audience. The presenter is not allowed to see the slides before presenting, must speak to each slide without skipping and should tie them into a cohesive theme, based on a preassigned topic. Prizes awarded for creativity and humor based on audience vote. We welcome nonparticipants to be in our audience. This can be both challenging and hysterical. Don't miss it!

**Wilderness Survival** – Boardroom C – 7:30 - 8:45pm

Sarah Maurer

**Double Deck Cancellation Hearts Tournament** – Business Center – 7:00 - 9:00pm

Andrea Giarnieri

**Whiskey Pairing Tasting** – Hotel Dining Area – 8:45 - 9:45pm

Franck Mounier

Surprise yourself with amazing synergies. Everybody knows the food and wine pairing. Have you ever tried food and whiskey pairing? You will taste various premium whiskies each paired with a snack that might well surprise your palate in an unsuspected way!

By the end of the experience, you may very well feel that your nosing and tasting skills have greatly improved! The goal overall? have fun, learn and drink together!

**Trivia by the pool!** – Swimming Pool - Pool time starts at 9:00pm, Trivia starts at 10:00pm

Jeremy Slagle & David de Corlieu

Join this first amazing experience! Teams will be composed of members who will stay on the side (no swimming suit needed) and members who will be in the water (swimming suit required!). There will be a combination of trivia questions and pool games that we add points to each team.

Fun guaranteed!

**Poker game** - Business Center – 10:00pm - midnight

Deb Stone

If tournament poker isn't your thing, or if you were busy in the afternoon, we will be happy to have a regular (friendly) poker game at this time.

**Movie night** - Boardroom B – 10:45pm – midnight+

Let's watch a movie together!

The title of the movie will be announced on site.

Sunday January 22, 2023

**Leadership development Workshop: Trash the plan!**: Boardroom C – 9:00 – 11:00am

Franck Mounier and the NNJM ExComm

Are you interested or curious about how relevant a strategic plan is for a Mensa chapter?

During the first part you will learn the key principles of a plan, how to build a plan, the relevance of such a plan, and you will look at our freshly brewed 2024 NNJM plan, the fourth that our chapter has produced.

In the second part, we will present our action plan, and, in breakout groups, we will ask the audience to “trash the plan”! The groups will be tasked to determine why such a plan cannot work, where are the weaknesses, the flaws, the aspects that the team didn’t think about. Be tough, it is a stress test! New ideas of actions might arise as well.

The groups will report back, and some of the people who have created the plan will comment, rebuke or accept the feedback. This feedback will be used to strengthen our plan.

This will be a very fun exercise, hopefully useful for all: through this interactive workshop, the participants will have learned how to build a plan and what a stress-test looks like for a real plan. Most importantly, the participants may discover for themselves that this could be relevant for their chapter.

This is a “Leadership Development Workshop”, open to all. Each participant brings one point to their Chapter for the Jewel Award!

**Gone! With Mensa!** - Boardroom B – 10:00 – 11:00am

Travel is exciting. Squeezing as many places go to as possible in a short time is thrilling. Need to get as much in before I’m “Only Old Once!”. I’ve done some exploring during/after in places like: Prague; Nara, Japan; Nice and Paris; Budapest; London; Budva; and, most recently, Stockholm. Maybe some USA spots as well - Yellowstone!

**BLAST! good-bye’s** – Meeting room A –11:30am – 12pm noon

Everyone is encouraged to participate!

Time to acknowledge the winners of our tournaments, thank all the volunteers and share any feedback.

**END**

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