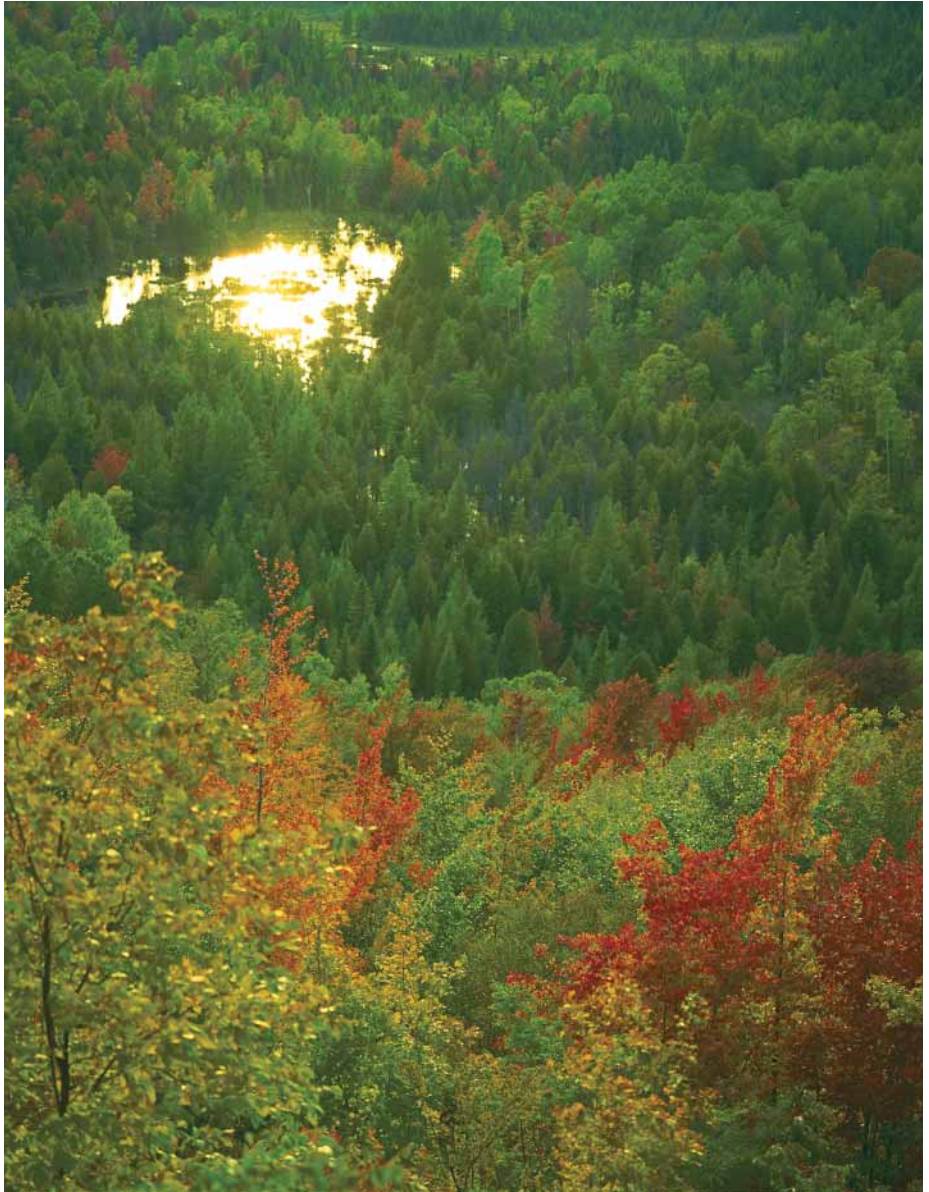




Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



October 2003 Calendar

Saturday, October 11

Picnic: Deep Woods Studio, Mancelona, 12:00 Noon

Deep Wood Studio, located 4 miles northwest of Mancelona, on the Cedar River. This is the business location and home of Chad Pastotnik and his wife, the former Kathryn Schultz. Bring all of your own eating supplies, including beverages, and anything you'd care to share. Following lunch on the Pastotnik's deck and riverside dock, Chad will provide us a demonstration of the art of Fine Letterpress printing and bookbinding at his Deep Wood Studio. Afterward, those who wish may go on a short walk (after a short drive) to enjoy the fall colors, which should be at their peak, in the Jordan River Valley.

Directions: From the traffic light on U.S. 131 in the heart of Mancelona, take M-88 west (toward Bellaire) for a few blocks (one-half mile) until you reach Cedar River Road, which heads due north. Follow it for approximately three miles until it makes a steep descent. At the bottom of the hill, you will intersect with Doerr Road. Turn left (west) there and continue for about a mile and a quarter until you see a MENSA sign at the entrance to Deep Wood Press. Someone will direct you where to park.

Saturday, October 18

3rd Annual Fall Games Night, Traverse City, 6:00

Tom Kachadurian will host his third annual Games Night at his home in Traverse City. Tom will make pizza, salad and whatever for dinner. Members and their guests can bring their own drinks. The game will start at about 7:30.

Your ticket for admission is 20 or more trivia questions each on a small piece of paper (4.25"x2.75" — an 8.5x11 sheet folded into 8 sections) that we can put in a hat. Do not write answers on the questions. Any topic is acceptable, but questions should be answerable with clear exact statements. Good taste is expected. We'll divide into teams and play some sort of quiz game. Of course card players and those who wish to play something else are also welcome.

Call or Email for exact directions to Tom's house, which is at 1640 Indian Woods Drive near NMC. 231-947-4328 or tom@kachadurian.com

Friday, October 24

TGIF - Horizon Shine Café, Traverse City 6:00 p.m.

The Horizon Shine Café is located in the lower level of Horizon Books on Front Street in downtown Traverse City. Wrap sandwiches, salads, and beverages are available for purchase.

Borealis is published by Northern Michigan Mensa (3/496) once each month under the auspices of its Executive Committee.

After mandatory items, priority in the newsletter is given to matters appealing to members of the group which relate to their membership in Mensa. The content of the newsletter shall appeal to the general membership of Northern Michigan Mensa.

The newsletter shall not include matters which are indecent, scandalous, libelous, or invade someone's privacy, nor shall copyrighted material be used without the permission of the owner. Ethnic, racist, sexist, or religious slurs shall not be printed. Bad jokes are allowed. Northern Michigan Mensa recognizes that the newsletter is addressed to both minors and adults; material printed will be appropriate for distribution to minors.

All matters submitted to the editor shall be subject to editing for content, style, and space limitations, except that if a person submits material with a restriction that it be published "as is or not at all." That a person has written and submitted something to the newsletter is not, in itself, sufficient reason for its publication.

Submissions are not only welcome, the editor will buy you a coffee at the next TGIF if you help him out.

Members of Northern Michigan Mensa may send their original writing submissions to *Borealis*.

Please do not send the work of others unless such submissions are accompanied by written permission and release of copyright from the author.

Writing:

1. Submit writing that can be edited for length and clarity, but not content. *This will be the default editorial assumption unless the author indicates otherwise.*

2. Writing may be submitted to be published only as it is. If writing is submitted "as is or not at all" it will not be edited in any way, and if published, will appear with an editor's note indicating it is wholly the work of the author.

3. Writing that is rough and needs major editing may also be submitted. If you have written something but don't have time to polish and edit it, you can still submit it and, at your request, I will give it extra help.

ALL. Writing and letters may be submitted by email as an attachment or as the message body itself. Typed pages and letters can be mailed.

Photographs:

Photographs and other scanned artwork can be submitted via email as JPEG or GIF files. Data should be at least 3x5 inches at 200 PPI. Digital camera files may be sent right from the camera; they will be processed for publication.

Flat art or photographs can also be mailed, but please do not send originals. Please label each piece submitted with your name and address.

Email: kachadurian@chartermi.net

US mail: *Borealis*

Thomas Kachadurian

P.O. Box 3434

Traverse City, MI 49685

Jumping Off the Curve

JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO, in these very pages, I wrote about the technology roller coaster that photography has been riding for the last few years. In fact, half of our culture is surfing a technology wave that will ultimately soak us all. While it feels good to hang ten for a few minutes with that new HD TV or Palm XX, it's old before the case is even dusty.

Keeping up with technology is partly responsible for the back hole that has become educational spending in America. A school district that throws down for the latest, hottest computer lab finds that it is woefully out of date before the 10th graders present at its inauguration have even graduated. While keeping up with hardware in any technology stream can break the bank, the real anguish comes from mental drain. Michigan has a program offering free IT training to any educator, but even with free training the teachers are outstripped by technology at every turn.

As Mensans we are naturally curious about the innovations in any endeavor, but at what cost? In the last ten years I have become expert at five different Apple operating systems. People call me at all hours with their dire computer problems. People who I helped with OS-8 expect me to know the answers when they have a problem with OS-11.R.9. And often I do. But what price have I, and countless others like me, paid for all this knowledge? Our brains are filled with deep understanding of OS-7, OS-8, OS-8.5 and OS-9 that are all now useless bits of data. We can't just throw out the cards and wipe the hard disk clean. It's in there and it isn't coming out.

There is a long list of this sort of knowledge, and it doesn't end at computers. Palm software, VCR and Calculator programming, even the rules for recording music are all different than they were just five years ago. Although I once knew enough about cars to completely rebuild the engine of my 1967 Falcon, when I look under the hood of a car today, I am in a foreign land.

I, for one, have had it. I'm done learning about things that have a half-life of 7 months. I am on a quest for knowledge that will last. There are plenty of good choices. One of my long-time passions comes to mind—cooking. A really good chocolate cake recipe will taste just as good 30 years from now as it does today. Even when I'm an old geezer I'll still enjoy waffles made from scratch.

My wife decided to take up piano in her thirties. The learning curve was steep. But now, 8 years later, she can make something clearly enjoyable for the listener, and she gets better every day. I am confident that until her fingers get too stiff to move she'll be filling our home with music.

I am taking an evening course with the MSU Extension. By some time next spring I'll be a "Master Gardener." Not bad for a guy who could kill any green thing just two years ago. It's the perfect sort of pursuit for a Mensan. There are volumes of really esoteric facts, and plant scientists are the sort of people who don't mind if you have a bit of broccoli between your teeth. There are even Latin words to memorize. Ah Heaven. Most importantly, nobody is going to change the software that makes a tree grow.

Thirty years from now I'll have forgotten the various operating systems that fill my head now. But as I slowly move through my garden I'll know just how to cut back basil to encourage it to grow thick and delicious. I'll take the fruits of my garden into the kitchen and make up a batch of pesto, listening to my wife plunking away at Chopin in the dining room. We'll sit down to a good meal and know our lives have not been wasted.

Election Information

from Gary McWhiter, Local Secretary

IT'S TIME TO BEGIN THE PROCESS of determining who will form the five-person voting membership of the Executive Committee for Northern Michigan Mensa, for the next two-year term to commence January 1, 2004.

The first step has already been taken in selecting a three-person nominating committee. Kelli Bingham, Ralph Hillquist, and Pete Turkus were the first three members to volunteer. A motion was made, seconded and then approved unanimously at our September 13th brunch to accept them.

Any Northern Michigan Mensa member interested in being a candidate for voting membership of the Executive Committee should contact Kelli, Ralph or Pete. They will nominate candidates in time for inclusion in the ballot.

The five candidates receiving the most votes in the election will become the next voting members of the ExComm. They will decide who will serve in the required officer roles of Local Secretary, Deputy Local Secretary and Treasurer. The remaining two members will be At-Large Members.

Kelli, Ralph and Pete may be contacted:

Kelleen S. Bingham	Ralph K. Hillquist	Peter J. Turkus
231-258-8753	231-882-0233	231-941-8321
kellbing@localnet.com	rkhillquist@chartermi.net	petencheri@chartermi.net

If there should be a problem obtaining a minimum of five candidates, you can assume the nominating committee will then become a drafting committee.

The term for the appointed members of the ExComm runs concurrently with the voting members. When the new voting members assume their duties, they will appoint or re-appoint the non-voting members of the ExComm.

Paraphrasing our NMM Bylaws with respect to Elections.

- (1) The Nominating Committee will nominate one or more candidates for each of five openings on the Executive Committee.
- (2) The November *Borealis* will list the names of those nominated.
- (3) Additional names, submitted on petitions signed by at least five members, may be presented to the Nominating Committee by November 15 for inclusion on the ballot.
- (4) Ballots will be in the December *Borealis*. Completed ballots must be received by the chairman of the Election Committee by December 20.
- (5) Election results are published in the January *Borealis*.
- (6) Challenges to the results must be made in writing to the chairman of the Election Committee and must be received by January 15.

Roaming the Region

by Charlie Bruce (aka Gloater)

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from the latest Region 3 RG, Pittsburgh's "HELL with the Lid Off". For those of you who weren't there, you missed a good time. They had their usual good food, programs, tournaments and games, all with an extra day because of the Labor Day holiday. Linda Hathaway, LocSec and RG Chair, became a Hall of Fame Party Animal and I also got to finally deliver the rest of the PRP awards to Alj Mary, Phoenix's previous editor. Mucho kudos to Linda and Alj.

I've been discussing the way Columbus Area Mensa does New Member Parties with several individuals, and it was suggested I include it in my monthly column, so here goes. Approximately every three months we get a listing of all Mensans who have joined or moved into the group within the past year. Someone then calls each one and personally invites them to come to a scheduled "New Member Party". New members do not have to bring anything; the regular members that are attending provide the food and drink. The advantage is that most of the people attending are first timers to the group so they already have a lot in common. Also, the regular members are usually tasked with "attaching" to a new member and insuring that they are introduced around and included in discussions and games. After several of these parties, some of the new members eventually become regular members. Try it with your group. Select a weekend night, a host with a large enough home, and several volunteers to pull it together. Then call the new members (and also some of those you haven't seen in a while) and have a party.

Columbus Area Mensa will host the next Region 3 Leadership Development Workshop (LDW) the weekend of February 27 - 28, 2004. Red Bellamy will be my LDW Chairperson and we will have it at the same hotel where we had our last RG, the Best Western in Reynoldsburg. We also plan to include a 4-hour class on Food Safety geared towards occasional food preparation in the special area of Mensa RG hospitality. This will be taught by a licensed sanitarian from the Columbus Health Department who has been teaching for over 25 years. Plan to attend and stay tuned for further information.

Dark Secret

by Kelleen S. Bingham

October 30-31, 1996

I'm sure you won't believe me when
I tell you what I know
About something that happened to
Me very long ago.

I was quite young and so it is
Hazy even to me.
You'll doubt at first, but just listen
And you will surely see.

For I have proof that what I say
Is purely the truth.
I have a claw, a bit of hair,
And yes, even a tooth.

I swear sincerely on my soul
That this is not a lie,
For I recall with true horror
That I made someone die.

Not me, you say? I couldn't
Possibly do such a thing?
Well, I am sure you'll change your mind,
If you keep listening.

You see, it all began one day
When I was about ten.
My life had been perfectly normal
Right up until then.

I was playing out in the woods
When dusk began to fall.
I started walking home for I
Knew soon Mother would call.

There was a full moon in the sky
To help me find my way,
And all was peaceful and calm in
The waning Autumn day.

Then suddenly I heard a noise
And as I turned to see,
I stared in shock at the creature
That stood in front of me.

At first I thought it was a man,
For he stood quite upright.
But his face looked more like a dog
In the glowing moonlight.

What happened next? Well, you see friend,
I really couldn't say
For I was so very frightened
I fainted dead away.

When I awoke my Mother's voice
Was calling frantically,
And I was lying on the ground
Beneath a maple tree.

I rushed back home where Mother
Proceeded to question me.
But I didn't know what to say.
What did I really see?

And there was a mark on my neck
Hidden under the hair.
It looked somewhat like a dog bite.
Now how did that get there?

I tried to make myself forget.
I said it was a dream.
But now and then, from fitful sleep,
I would wake up and scream.

Then one month later the next full
Moon began to appear.
And still, just thinking back on it
Will fill my heart with fear.

As the moon rose into the sky
My form began to change.
The face I saw in the mirror
Was distorted and strange.

As the transformation took place
I felt a growing need;
A burning thirst that could only
Be quenched by evil deed.

So I slipped out into the night
To search for human prey.
My hunger drove me on until
I found someone to slay.

My victim was a robust man
Who was out chopping wood.
I crept quietly through shadows
Till I reached where he stood.

With glowing eyes and small, sharp teeth
I pounced upon his back.
But he grabbed me and threw me down
Upon a kindling stack.

I jumped back up and dove for him,
But he was strong and quick.
And as I tried to bite his arm
He hit me with a stick.

He knocked a tooth out of my mouth,
But that didn't stop me.
I kept fighting with a fierceness
I hope you'll never see.

He grabbed an ax and swung as I
Tried to claw out his eyes.
As the end of my toe came off,
The night filled with my cries.

But I kept fighting with the man,
Driven by blind fury.
And though his power was great, the
Stronger creature was me.

I tore open his throat and drank
His blood so thick and hot.
When I was done, I left him lying
There in that same spot.

Exhausted, I lay down to sleep
Right next to my victim.
When I opened my eyes, the first
Thing that I saw was him

In shock, I looked at what I'd done:
The blood spread all around,
And the man with his throat torn out
Lying upon the ground.

The horror filled my soul as I
Realized that it was true.
I'd killed a man, and I just didn't
Know what I should do.

I was just a child of ten
With just one place to go.
I went back home and told Mother
I had something to show.

I took her to the man and I
Explained it all to her.
She didn't believe me at first,
But next month she'd be sure.

The next month I convinced her to
Chain me up to my bed.
She promised not to set me free
No matter what I said.

She watched the change in shocked silence
And there she made a vow.
She'd keep me from killing again.
She'd find a way somehow.

So, once a month I go back home
Where Mother waits with chains
To keep the terrible horror
From happening again

Now do you believe my story?
Do you know it's the truth?
For look here and I will show you
That I'm missing a tooth.

And do you see my index finger
Is missing at the end?
I swear to you all I have said
Is not a lie, my friend.

I know you are wondering why
I've told you this story.
Well, I was hoping that you would
Do a favor for me.

Unfortunately Mother was
Sick and died just last week.
And since you are my friend, I thought
It's your help I should seek.

For tonight the moon will be full
And I will change again.
And I need someone with me who
Is good with locks and chains.

Dear, the Neighbors Are Coming Over

HERE, A Biography of the New American Continent

by Anthony DePalma - Publisher: Public Affairs - 2001

THE AUTHOR, while covering the negotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] for The New York Times, goes deep into the co-mingled history of Mexico, Canada and the United States. Mr. DePalma was not your garden variety business or tourist traveler. He, his wife and children lived, worked and went to school in the countries he covered. Those experiences led to fresh perspectives not easily obtained by weekend conferences or package vacations. As a result, he implies that NAFTA is merely a formalization of present reality and an ongoing process. This reviewer found his views somewhat optimistic but admits that his concerns with NAFTA's present impact has clouded his ability to take a very long view.

The real meat of this book is the history of these three countries and how they came to be. All three are rooted in the acid soil of European exploitation and conquest. All three gained independence through a combination of armed revolt, vast geography and weary oppressors. All three are as different from each other as any nations sharing borders on this planet. From the somewhat fatalistic character of Mexico to the perpetual identity crisis of Canada to the dominating exuberance of the United States, they occupy the North American continent with formal relations and informal trepidation given the history of how the present borders were formed. The author sees the three going from neighbors stuck with each other to neighbors acknowledging their interdependence.

HERE gives a sense of expanded place as well as leading to an expanded sense of "us." The book flows with the author's travels and experiences and engages the reader without being judgmental. Pull up a chair, have some french fries sprinkled with vinegar and a cold Mexican beer while reading. Both the snack and the book are recommended.

Reviewer - Tom Sheldon - tomsheldon@chartermi.net

Northern Michigan Mensa Executive Committee

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check out our website at: www.nmm.us.mensa.org

ON THE COVER: Jordan River, view from Deadman's Hill.

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Borealis

Northern Michigan Mensa

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