



Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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.

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Northern Michigan Mensa

November 2003 Calendar

Saturday, November 8

Brunch: Cottage Cafe, Traverse City 11:00 a.m.

The Cottage Cafe is at the Days Inn in Traverse City at 420 Munson (US-31 North). It's on the south side of the road between the Northwestern Michigan College entrance and 8th Street. We will meet in the garden room located to the left as you come in the main entrance.

Friday, November 21

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

The Horizon Shine Cafe 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.

Subject: FW: vrey itnresting.

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Amzanig huh?

AMC needs Membership help

American Mensa Ltd needs your help to correct a technical inconsistency in our Certificate of Incorporation.

Ironically, even though the Certificate apparently has been out of sync with the New York law covering not for profit organizations since it was filed in 1971, it was only now brought to our attention and we need to deal with this inconsistency right away.

While AML Bylaws require that members vote via mail in elections and Bylaws referenda, the New York State Not For Profit Business Corporation Law says that such elections and referenda must be conducted by in-person voting during the Annual Business Meeting (“ABM”), unless our Certificate of Incorporation says otherwise. As long as the Certificate has certain “magic words,” the Bylaws’ mail ballots are permitted.

The Certificate lacks those few words needed to permit elections and referenda to be conducted by mail or other methods. It also doesn’t specify a quorum for the ABM. As a result, the default quorum under New York law applies, a majority of the membership, not just a majority of those in attendance at the ABM.

The solution is to amend the Certificate at the 2004 ABM. The proposed amendment contains two parts. The first part sets a quorum for the ABM of 100 members, the smallest number allowed under the New York law. The second part allows members to vote other than in-person at a meeting, thus bringing the Certificate and our historical voting procedures onto the same page.

Because our Certificate of Incorporation doesn’t currently contain a provision outlining specifically how to amend it, we must follow New York law. Approval of the proposed amendment requires that a majority of the entire membership cast their votes at the ABM. The good news is that proxies are allowed to get those votes to the meeting. We are permitted to collect proxies via mail, fax, e-mail and the AML website.

Between Nov. 1 and the July 2004 ABM, AML will conduct a campaign to gather proxies authorizing an attendee at the ABM to vote in favor of the amendment. The proxies, incidentally, are revocable, should someone who has voted by proxy later decide to attend the meeting and vote in person. A vote approving the amendment of the certificate will resolve the inconsistency.

We have developed the following “Q&A.” Should you have questions which are not answered here, please forward them to ProxyQuestions@us.mensa.org.

Questions and Answers on the Incorporation Issue

Q: Who is to blame for this happening?

A: No one. It was an honest oversight that occurred more than 30 years ago. However, now that we are aware of the discrepancy, we have an obligation to fix it.

Q: How did this surface?

A: The AMC and national office researched the possibility of allowing members to cast election ballots via the internet in future elections, and so consulted attorneys who are expert (not Mensa members) in the field of not for profit governance. These independent attorneys discovered this inconsistency between AML’s Certificate of Incorporation and its Bylaws, and advised us on how to go about making it right.

Q: How long is this going to take?

A: The proxies will be exercised during the 2004 AG in Las Vegas at the Annual Business Meeting on July 2.

Q: How many proxies do we need to get?

A: The actual number will be determined at the Annual Business Meeting, but, based on membership numbers as of the end of June, we estimate that 23,000 will be the target number representing the majority of the membership.

Q: Can I retract my proxy once I give it?

A: Absolutely. You may withdraw your proxy at any time up to the day of the Annual Business Meeting. So, if you are not sure whether you are going to the Annual Gathering, it would be best for you to submit your proxy now. And you must be a current dues-paying member for your proxy to count, so if you fail to renew your membership, your proxy will be withdrawn.

Q: Does this mean the Secretary can vote for me on any issue at the Annual Business Meeting?

A: No, this is a directed proxy. The Secretary will only vote on your behalf for this specific issue.

Q: When can I place my proxy and how?

A: Proxy forms are being mailed in the November-December issue of the Mensa Bulletin. The forms will also be available on line not later than November 1st. We also plan to make these forms available at RGs and in future mailings, such as dues mailings, etc.

Q: What if I send in more than one proxy?

A: The proxy with the latest date on it is the one that will count. Only one proxy per member will be counted in the final tally.

Q: How will I know if you received my proxy?

A: All proxies will be acknowledged. Members submitting a proxy will get an email or postcard acknowledging that the proxy has been received within 7 to 10 business days of submission. This acknowledgement will be sent to the email address or postal address on file with the national office.

Q: How will I know how the proxy campaign is progressing?

A: A tally will be posted in the “members only” area of the AML web site, beginning sometime in November. We will let you know when it’s online. You may also subscribe to a special email list (proxies@lists.us.mensa.org) that will send you regular reports on our progress. An update will also appear in each issue of the *Bulletin*.

Q: Who is running this proxy campaign?

A: The proxy campaign is being managed by a special committee of the AMC, under the leadership of Past Chair and current Development Officer Gabe Werba with the support of staff at the national office.

Q: Is my proxy a secret ballot?

A: No, proxies will be tracked and reported.

Q: Will everything be okay once we make this change?

A: Yes. Once the amendment to our Certificate of Incorporation is approved and filed with the State of New York, our Bylaws and related practices regarding elections will comply with the Not For Profit Corporation Law.

Q: How can I help?

A: Submit your proxy and encourage others to submit their proxies. If you are involved with your local group leadership, consider a local effort to ensure a good response to this request. Local groups will be getting lists of their members who have submitted proxies on a periodic basis. In order to keep costs down, proxies submitted via the AML web site are the most economical; most process steps are completely automated. Oh, and don’t forget to renew your membership!

Q: What if I want to vote no?

A: You certainly have the right to vote “no” to amending the Certificate of Incorporation. But why would you want to? AML is legally obligated to keep trying to fix this problem until it is solved, no matter what the ultimate economic cost. By sending in your proxy now, you will help AML save time and money.

Backyard Bear

from Gary McWhirter

ANYONE LIVING IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN is aware of the variety of wildlife sharing our area. Most of us are aware there are places with an occasional black bear living in the “woods.” I had even heard stories of several of our neighbors having seen a bear in our immediate neighborhood.

The evening of September 1st, 2003 my wife and I finally joined those who have seen a wild Michigan black bear. The bear was in a wooded area but more specifically he was just outside our bedroom window.

I had gone to bed at 11:00 p.m. and had fallen asleep almost immediately. Fifteen minutes later Donna shook me awake to say, “we have a visitor at our bird feeder”. She turned on our backyard floodlights and when I got to the open bedroom window, I saw (approximately ten feet away) a large bear picking up a suet block from where it had fallen to the ground. He had tipped over the stand holding three bird feeders and in one bite swallowed a six-inch square block of suet.

The floodlights illuminating him and the backyard didn’t at all disturb the bear, instead he seemed to enjoy the lighting—easier to see what he was eating. Donna whispered to me she was going to get her camera but I whispered back, “no, I don’t want to frighten him with a flash”. I’m thinking, let’s just watch quietly and hope he doesn’t discover us only ten feet away with only a screened window between us. I thought the sound of our whispering would be covered by the sound of a circulating fan in the room with us.

Just then, the bear sat down, much like you or I might. He reached out, picked up one of the fallen seed feeders and began to lick sunflower seeds from the feeders opening. This only lasted a short time, something frightened him, and he jumped up, grabbed the remaining feeder in his mouth and ran on all fours toward the woods. I remember Donna saying, “he’s stealing our bird feeder”. But, after running only twenty feet or so, he stopped, looked back over his shoulder, decided there was nothing there to frighten him, dropped the feeder and slowly walked off and into the woods.

We learned later than our son had driven up to the front of the house and apparently the bear had heard him closing the door of his truck.

I haven’t much experience judging the weight of bears, but I have known men that weighed three hundred or more pounds. This bear was larger than any of the three hundred-pound men I have known.

Having loved the outdoors my whole life, I love the idea of living in a place that is shared by an occasional. But I must admit that walking out into our backyard at night was a little “spooky” the first several times after our night-time caller’s visit.

A Friend in Need

By Ellen Monahan

THERE WAS A LOT OF COMMOTION UNDER THE DOCK. John went to investigate and saw a mallard struggling. The duck seemed to have an injured wing and a broken neck. It appeared to be near exhaustion so John picked it up in a towel and took it to the shore to see if he could help. The bird had a three pronged fish hook in him. One prong was in his breast, one in his wing, and in attempting to get them out of himself, he had caught his beak in the hook as well. This is why his neck appeared broken. He was caught with his beak under his wing.

John quickly retrieved some pliers from the house. The duck seemed to know John wanted to help him or he was so exhausted he couldn't protest. He allowed John to work on him for a long time. It must have been painful for the duck and it was for John, too. Finally he freed the breast and the wing, but the beak was really tough to extricate. After much twisting and turning, the hook released from the beak and the bird's neck straightened right out.

John laid his patient on a hummock of grass right by the shore and kept an eye on him for a long time in case some predator might spot the easy meal. A mother duck and six babies had considerable interest in our mallard too. The mallard did not move for quite a long time. Finally he managed to get himself into the water and met the mother duck who must have been his mate.

Several hours later John saw a mallard, a mother, and 6 baby ducks swimming together near the dock.

Exercise your brain

From Ben Stout

1. If two coins are dropped, there are just three possible ways they can show; as two heads, as two tails, or as one of each. The question is, what are the probabilities of each combination coming up if they are dropped 100 times? Don't be in too big of a hurry and jump to the obvious conclusion.

2: Three men, traveling across the country by car, decide to rent a motel room for the night for all three of them. They stop at a motel, and the clerk rents them a room for \$30, so each pays the clerk \$10. They are shown to their room, but when the clerk checks up, he finds that he has overcharged them; the room is supposed to rent for \$25. He takes five one dollar bills from the cash register and goes to return them the money. However, on his way, he decides it will be difficult to divide the \$5 evenly between the three men; so he decides to give each man a dollar and keep two dollars for himself as a tip. The men are glad to get the refund, the owner will be glad that the room is rented at the regular price, and the clerk is happy with his \$2 tip.

There is one problem: if the men each get one dollar back, then they have paid \$9 each, making a total of \$27. The clerk has a \$2 tip, making a total of \$29. Where is the other dollar from the \$30 the men paid in the first place?

3: If the level of water in a water tower supplying water to a village is 75 feet above the ground, what will be the approximate water pressure per square inch at ground level, assuming that a gallon of water weighs eight pounds?

4: Two men are looking at a portrait of a man. One says to the other; "Brothers and sisters have I none, but that man's father is my father's son." What relation is the speaker to the man in the picture?

You can email Ben Stout with your answers at: pbstout@coslink.net

Phobophobia

By Ruth Minshull

SOME YEARS AGO, while visiting my son in Dallas, I spent part of an afternoon in the huge public library looking for the word describing the fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth. (It's Arachibutyrophobia..)

Nowadays, of course, a person can acquire such information in minutes on the Web. If you can think of it, you can Google it. The only pitfall in this wondrous convenience is the risk of becoming entertainingly sidetracked.

In fact, while writing the reference above I, once again, had to look up Arachibutyrophobia. (I so seldom need the word.) I went to Google and typed in "fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth" and got 1870 hits.

I located the word immediately, but in the process I stumbled onto an enthralling site that listed over 500 phobias-all genuine. Wow! a cornucopia of neuroses. How could there possibly be so many? I wondered. Are people really that messed up?

I was hooked. I had to peruse that list.

First I spotted Acarophobia-the fear of itching. Well, an itch is not always pleasant, but fearing it?

Nearby I discovered Acerophobia, which is the fear of sourness. What does such an afflicted person do? Hide in the closet when he sees a lemon? Scream in terror at the appearance of a pickle jar? A trip through the supermarket must be a nightmare.

There's a fear of asymmetrical things (Asymmetriphobia). What would happen if such a woman inadvertently married a man who suffered with Symmetriphobia (fear of symmetry)? That union would end faster than a Hollywood marriage.

On the other hand, some people are made for each other. A person with Dextrophobia (fear of objects at the right side of the body) could pair up with a Levophobic (one who fears things to the left side of the body). They could flank each other appropriately ("I gotcha covered, Babe.") and live happily ever after.

A fussy spot with Ataxophobia (fear of disorder or untidiness) must be a barrel of laughs to have around.

Now a woman cursed with Auophobia (fear of gold) if combined with a fear of diamonds, could be a low-maintenance dream wife. Sorry guys, I couldn't find any name for fear of diamonds. I doubt if such a phobia exists. In fact, I'd be a little suspicious of a woman who was an Auophobic. She could be holding out for platinum.

Almost every color has its own phobia, as does nearly every nationality.

Bolshephobia, for instance, is fear of Bolsheviks.

Help! I think I'm catching phobophobia (fear of phobias).

Didaskaleinophobia is the fear of going to school. Some imaginative kid should have received an "A" for cooking up that one.

There's even a fear of insanity. To that bedeviled soul I'd have to say, "No reason to fear that, buddy, you're already there."

There are two words for fear of taste (Geumaphobia and Geumophobia). Now would that be good taste or bad taste?

Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia is the fear of long words. Sure. The sadistic psychiatrist who dreamed up that label was trying to keep his patient coming back forever. He'd probably start every session with, "So, Mortimer, how's your Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia today?" and the hapless patient would dive behind the couch-trembling uncontrollably.

Logophobia is the fear of words. Now, where would you go to hide from those?

I wasn't surprised to discover that there is a name for fear of thinking, Phronemophobia. That seems a pretty widespread malady to me.

Politico-phobia is the fear or dislike of politicians. Come on, what exactly is abnormal about that?

This plethora of phobias has to be a product of our modern culture. Obviously we have too much free time to hang out and fuss about things. If we had to hustle around and plow the fields and bake the bread and beat the clothes clean we'd be too tired at the end of the day to fret about such trifles. I'm sure there was no time for this kind of nonsense in the days of cavepersons.

She says, "I think you'd better go hunting today, sugarplum. That boar you caught last week is getting a bit rank."

"Oh, you know I can't go out today, pumpkin. My Agrizoophobia (fear of wild animals) is worse than usual. Couldn't we just eat some plants and berries?"

"Oh, Mighty Slayer, I couldn't possibly do that. My Botanophobia (fear of plants) is making me crazy."

Yes. I think these phobias are the result of our enlightened times. Anyway, I'm thankful I don't have to deal with that fear of words (mentioned above) or I never would have stumbled on Zemmiphobia-fear of the Great Mole Rat.

Although I haven't yet dug up a description of a Great Mole Rat, I did learn how to identify the Naked Mole Rat. "Picture a hot dog that's been left in a microwave a little too long, add some buckteeth at one end, and you've got a fairly good idea of what a Naked Mole Rat looks like."

Well, I don't care whether it's clothed or not. If I see any kind of a Mole Rat baring its buckteeth at me, I'm going to run for it. I guess that makes me a Zemmiphobic.

New Members Continue to Join

from Jack Schultz

OCTOBER WAS A BUSY MONTH for Northern Michigan Mensa. It began with a great day at Deep Wood Studio, my son-in-law's and daughter's unique "fine letterpress" printing and bookbinding business on the banks of the Cedar River, located between Mancelona and Bellaire in Antrim County. Eleven of us from the NMM "family," plus the two of them, enjoyed beautiful fall weather and a very informative presentation. Each person was also given the opportunity to print his/her own specially crafted bookmark bearing witness to Mensa's being there that day. Among our group was John Porter (Traverse City) who attended his first NMM event. After a picnic lunch, eight of us drove a few miles to a vantage point called "Landslide" which overlooks the scenic Jordan River valley. Fall colors were at their absolute peak at that location.

The third "annual" Fall Games Night and Supper at Tom Kachadurian's home was again a great success. That fell on the same day as Mensa's National Testing Day, and Sue Styles and I both served as proctors—in different locations—this year. Sue tested people in Gaylord and I did so in Traverse City.

The September brunch at the Cottage Café in Traverse City brought forth three of our newest members: Penny Novarro (Elk Rapids), Lynn Durling (Rapid City), and Ben Stout (Traverse City). In addition, Tom Barnhart's companions from Sevastopol, Ukraine—Nataliya and her 15-year-old son "Slava"—joined us. Twenty-two people pretty well filled up the separate dining area where we met. It was especially nice to welcome Ben Stout and his wife Pansy for the first time because Ben is undoubtedly one of the most elderly Mensans in the organization. At least he is likely to be one who has joined at the oldest age...90 years.



Ben took the Mensa tests just this past July, so we are delighted to have him with us. He and Pansy live at the same retirement community in Traverse City where another of our members, Norma Feeley and her husband Marshall, live. They were also with us at the brunch.

Although Chet Rakowski's name didn't appear on the end-of-September printout we received from the national office, he has formally joined and thus makes our total membership in NMM now stand at 98. Chet is from Irons in Wexford County. He was one of the three people whom Sue Styles tested on September 6. All of those individuals qualified for Mensa membership and we hope the other two also join. Four of the five people tested in July qualified, and two of them—Ben Stout (Traverse City) and Hal Kranick (also of Traverse City) have joined.

Our next testing session has been scheduled for Saturday, December 6 for Traverse City. Please check our web site for detailed information about that session and let others who might be interested know about it. (We'll be in Room 147 of the James Beckett Building on the Northwestern Michigan College campus.)

We're getting to the point of having sufficient numbers of members in NMM that we can be thinking of expanding the kinds of activities we offer. These will include offering public seminars, workshops, or presentations. And my hope is that we will inaugurate our Mensa Mentors program sometime this coming year. That depends, in part, on whether or not we have a person appointed as Gifted Childrens Coordinator for our local group. But, I view Mensa Mentors as not just involving young people. There is so much experience and talent among our membership that I'm sure we can develop this as a rewarding program for all age levels. We have great turnout for our "social" type of events but we may well be able to offer more for members who are not as interested in just this aspect of being in Mensa. Ideas are always most welcome, so please don't hesitate to forward them to me.

The Executive Committee formally appointed Kelli Bingham, Ralph Hillquist, and Pete Turkus to serve as our Nominating Committee for the forthcoming election. They were also appointed to serve as the Election Committee. Details of how elections are handled were provided in the October issue of *Borealis*, as per our bylaws, so I hope all members read those and will be prepared to vote in the election when ballots are sent out with *Borealis* in the December issue.

NMM Participates in National Testing Day Again

Four individuals took the Mensa Admissions Tests on October 18 from our two proctors. Sue Styles tested a man from Oscoda and a woman from Grayling at the new testing site in Gaylord, and Jack Schultz tested a man from Traverse City and a woman from Interlochen at the testing site in Traverse City.

Roaming the Region

by Charlie Bruce (aka Gloater)

Several of you have been asking about the background of the a.k.a. Gloater in my byline and emails so I figure it's time to elucidate. The vanity plate on my Gold '98 Trans Am is also GLOATER and a lot of people may figure I gloat because I drive a neat sports car. Wrong. I've been driving Trans Ams for over 20 years so the "gloating" aspect has long past. The license plate frame is one of the gold MENSA frames sold in the Mensa Boutique, so maybe it's related to that high IQ image. Wrong again. After 28 years that also is taken for granted.

Actually the infamous Denny Bender, the BRUTAL man himself, bestowed that nickname upon me. But I'm getting ahead of myself. There is a group known as Heartbreakers that roams the Region 3 RG circuit (among others.) This is a Hell's M's group dedicated to playing DDCH (Double Deck Cancellation Hearts). Members of this group can usually be found all hours of the day and night in various areas (usually game rooms) having a lot of fun and making a lot of noise. Most have Hearts nicknames that have been "earned" by either their style of play or some incriminating event or happening during a game. My wife, Terry Graham, is BLACK WIDOW for the deadly way she plays, usually against me. There is HAZMAT, noted for her disastrous passes; LONG JOHN who usually goes a long time between taking points; BOOMERANG usually manages to give back what's she's passed; and BOWSER, but that's another story. Some of the other nicknames are 4Q, COBRA, DEBUTAUNT, GRAND MARSHALL, JUDGE JUDY, OCELOT, PHANTOM, PRINCESS, SCALPEL, SILVER, TART, and YUTZ. There are so many others with self-bestowed names that it would take up more room to list than this column is probably allowed. Well, GLOATER is the name, DDCH is the game, and my style of play when placing the aQueen of Spades where I feel she belongs... is probably obvious.

So the next time you're at an RG, mosey into the games room, follow the laughter, and stop by to see if you can put faces on some of these names. Oh, and the new AMC now has enough members that play DDCH; new names they are a-coming.

Northern Michigan Mensa Executive Committee

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