



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.

Email: kachadurian@chartermi.net

US mail: *Borealis*

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Northern Michigan Mensa

January 2004 Calendar

Saturday, January 10

ExComm Meeting - 10:00a.m.

Brunch - 11:00a.m.

Cottage Cafe, Traverse City

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. All Members are welcome to the Executive Committee Meeting. We will be meeting in the Papa's Den situated to the right as you enter the front door.

Monday, January 12

NEW REGULAR EVENT

Games Night - Borders Books, Traverse City 7:00p.m.

Borders is located near Wal-Mart at 2612 Crossing Circle (off S. Airport Road) in Traverse City. We will meet the second Monday of each month at the same location. Borders closes at 11:00, but we may break up sooner.

Each games night we will try a different game theme. For this first go we will start with a card game to be determined by the group that night. Certainly there could be more than one game at a time, perhaps cribbage and euchre, but eventually we would like to develop a slate of games we play each night. For example, scrabble night, trivia night, pinochle night, etc.; you get the idea. Bring a deck and join the fun!

Friday, January 23

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

The Horizon Shine Cafe is located in the lower level of Horizon Books on Front Street in downtown Traverse City. There are wrap sandwiches, soft drinks, and desserts on the menu.

It's a New Term

from Gary McWhirter

JANUARY 1, 2004 IS NOT ONLY THE BEGINNING of a New Year but it is the beginning of a new two-year term for the voting members of NMM's Executive Committee. Two of the current voting members, Ellen Monahan and Jack Schultz will remain on the board and continue at their current roles, Ellen as Treasurer and Jack as a Member-at-Large. Ellen and Jack will be joined by Sherry McNamara as our Local Secretary, Susan Styles as Deputy Local Secretary and Melissa Rennie as a Member-at-Large.

I want to thank both those remaining and those who were willing to "come aboard." You have all been very helpful in the past, I know you will be even more so in the future.

This past Saturday, December 13th the current Executive Committee met with three of five members present, one absent member a hospital patient and another on family vacation in the southwestern states. At the ExComm meeting a motion was made and passed unanimously by the voting members present to create two five hundred-dollar scholarships to be administered during the calendar year 2004. Recommendations were that one be for the traditional high school graduating senior and one for an unemployed, displaced person in need of retraining.

Later that day, during our brunch and after, there was some conversation as to whether the outgoing, lame duck board members should have made and passed such a commitment for the incoming board members. To this I can only say, scholarships have been a topic of conversation for most of this past year. The only reason ever given for not creating one or two small scholarships was a possible lack of funds. Although our current treasury is only a little more than two thousand dollars, the only expense this last year has been the costs of *Borealis* and the travel costs of our two Proctors. I do not see that one thousand dollars should be too burdensome and can not imagine a better place for a Mensa group to spend their money or invest in their future.

This will be my last article written while serving as Local Secretary; It has been an honor. If I were given carte blanche to choose my replacement, I couldn't do better than to choose the one actually taking my place.

Happy New Year to all!

Thanks everyone.

Passages

from Sherry McNamara

THROUGHOUT LIFE WE TRAVEL through many passages, hopefully learning from each experience, gaining insight, with the goal of improvement in the next passage. This is analogous to the life of a committee as well. For the past fifteen months we have had the courage of the first Executive Committee to lead us through uncharted waters on a safe voyage into our second year as Northern Michigan Mensa. What a fine job they did!

This committee was responsible for selecting people to start a newsletter, build membership, publicize our origination, as well as our activities. In addition, the group worked on civic related projects such as the NPR fund-raiser and the Cherry Festival. In all that hard work, we had fun.

I have been selected to be the Local Secretary for the 2004/2005 term and I would like to thank Gary McWhirter, Tom Barnhart, Ellen Monahan, Jack Schultz, and Lotus Young for all their hard work in getting our group up and running this past one and one-half years. They were the captains of this maiden voyage and have turned over the vessel to a new crew. In addition to me, Sue Styles is on board as the Deputy Local Secretary, Ellen Monahan will continue in the position of Treasurer, Jack Schultz and Melissa Rennie are At-Large Members.

We are ready to take the helm and sail ahead with new goals and more fun in the upcoming years. I am pleased to be part of this fine organization and that I welcome input any of you may have for new ideas for our future.

It Doesn't Get Much Better Than This

It has been most enjoyable for me to keep you abreast of the activities our group has been involved with during our first 16 months as Mensa's newest local group. This column represents my final one as Membership Officer however because Melissa Rennie will be taking over that role as of the first of the year. She is enthusiastic and I'm sure you'll find her "style" different from mine.

What a whirlwind competition we've been participating in since the early part of November! Charlie Bruce, our Regional Vice-Chairman, sought my help in getting a fire built under our membership in terms of getting out the vote in Mensa's national ProxyQuest. You have responded wonderfully! Not only did you begin voting almost immediately after I wrote you, but you've kept up the pace. We have led all local groups, in percentage of our membership who have cast their proxies, on every day except for one very brief time when Borderline Mensa (southeastern Arizona) overtook us. Mensa must achieve at least a 50 percent voter approval of the entire membership in order to modify the certificate of incorporation to comply with the laws of New York state where the organization is incorporated. On the day I write this (December 9) we in NMM have achieved a response of 55.8 percent voting. That still is far ahead of all other local groups nationally.

Our testing program continues, though we're not seeing as many people show up as we once did. Only four individuals participated in National Testing Day, with Sue testing two of them in Gaylord and me testing two of them in Traverse City. I then tested a young man who came to Traverse City from Cadillac during November, and two more men were tested in Traverse City on December 6. We will hold another session toward the end of January or early in February. Information about that session will appear on our web page when the details are firmed up.

Again, it has been fun supplying you with information about our activities. Now I can sit back and enjoy just being a proctor . . . and continuing participant on the ExComm. I think you'll find that the new ExComm has an abundant supply of ideas about what things our local group may do in the future. We laid a foundation during our first 16 months; now let's see where we go from here.

— Jack Schultz

A Royal Decision

From Ben Stout

No. 5: I recently returned from a trip. Today is Thursday. I returned three days before the day after the day before tomorrow. On what day did I return?

No. 6. My company made \$25,000 on a project, which was 121% more than it made on the same project last year. How much did my company make on the project last year?

No. 7. A man is jogging steadily at 8 miles per hour as he starts across a long railroad bridge. When he is $\frac{3}{8}$ of the way across he looks back and sees a train coming. He calculates that if he turns around toward where he entered the bridge, he will meet the train just as he reaches the entrance of the bridge. On the other hand, if he continues ahead at the same speed, the train will catch him just as he reaches the end of the bridge. What is the speed of the train?

No. 8 Once upon a time a king decided he needed someone to help him run his country so he decided to choose the most intelligent person in the realm by giving a series of tests. Finally all but three persons were eliminated, and they met with the king. He told them that the final test would be given, and each one would have an equal opportunity, but the one who first solved this problem would be chief of his advisors.

The test was this: the king said that they would be blind-folded, and he would stick a small dot, either red or white, on each one's forehead. The first one, after the blindfolds were removed, who could tell what color his dot was and explain how he knew would be the winner. He said he would offer one clue; at least one of the dots would be white. After the blindfolds were removed, one of the contestants raised his hand and said he knew his color. How did he know?

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

Stereotypes Shattered

By Lotus Young

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you ventured into the upper peninsula further than St. Ignace or Sault Ste. Marie? For me it had been forty years. It wasn't that I was shunning the U.P.; it was just that there were so many other seemingly more interesting places to visit. After all, the U.P. is a cultural wasteland best known for Yoopers and pasties (*pah-stees*), not to be confused with pasties (*pay-stees*) standard decorative equipment of a stripper. Yoopers are very particular about the correct pronunciation of this Yooper delicacy.

But I digress. Recently I was invited to spend some time with a friend who lives in Escanaba. After perusing a map and considering that I live in Ludington, I decided I could accomplish several travel opportunities in one trip; namely make my first crossing on the Lake Michigan Car Ferry, make my first visit to Wisconsin, and investigate Door County, a fabled tourist destination therein. I could do all of this on my way to Escanaba.

The car ferry crossing was sensational, four hours of wonderful time on Lake Michigan. Wisconsin was like visiting any Midwest state, except that this one was home of—and annoyingly proud of—the Green Bay Packers. Signs of the Packers are everywhere. And Door County was rather like having the Old Mission Peninsula transplanted into Wisconsin, except with cows and cheese. But I can say I've been there.

When I moved from Wisconsin to Michigan, it was rather like having passed through a curtain. In Wisconsin, the forests had been cleared and the land was filled with neat, tidy farms. Michigan, on the other hand, remained a forested wonder land. As I approached Escanaba, it became obvious that at least one of the stereotypes I held about the U.P. was about to bite the dust. Where were all the ramshackle shacks and down-at-the-heels trailers I'd expected to see dotting the countryside? They certainly weren't the soaring log and glass structures that I was passing! Or the elegant Victorian ladies I soon encountered!

As my friend took me for a drive around town, we meandered through eighty-one acres of city park strung along the shoreline of Lake Michigan, complete with marina, band shell, gazebo, playground, ball fields, and anything else a complete park should include. 81 acres! Along the lakeshore! Some long

ago city fathers certainly dreamed big!

That evening we attended a concert in the Boniface Fine Arts Center. The Superior String Alliance was presenting the Superior Festival Orchestra playing works by Glink, Stravinsky and Rimsky-Korsakov with a guest appearance by White Water, an upper peninsula folk group who played stringed instruments ranging from hammered dulcimer to 12-string bass in their performance. The evening was magical.

The following day, we attended an arts and crafts show at the waterfront. While there we were entertained by the Escanaba City Orchestra. The city voters have voted a 0.1 mill levy upon themselves to support this orchestra! So much for cultural wasteland!

That left only one stereotype to dispose of—the ubiquitous pasties. But they're so delicious why would anyone want to dispose of them except by eating? They are omnipresent—from Negaunee with its proud history of Class C football and basketball champions, to Munising and its charter boat rides to view the Pictured Rocks, and on to Route 2 as it winds itself along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Signs for pasties proliferate like rabbits. It's not the pasties that clutter the countryside, but the signs that advertise them.

Not even those ugly signs could dim the beauty of Michigan's upper peninsula. It is magnificent: green forests, blue water, open space. All the things most of us have come north to find, but in even greater supply! Yoopers even have two Great Lakes.

Do yourself a favor. Find time to travel across the Mighty Mac and then west into the land of Hiawatha. You'll be glad you did.

Question: Name two favorite native sons of the Upper peninsula?

Answers: Tom Izzo and Steve Marucci.

Different Memories

By *Melissa Rennie*

THE PRESENT SITUATION WITH IRAQ is bringing back memories of the first Gulf War for many people, but mine are much different than most Americans. When bombing started for the first Gulf War I was awakened by knocking at the door of my dorm at the Beijing Language Institute in the People's Republic of China. I made the quick decision to ditch class and listen to the BBC (at the time CNN was only available in the best foreign hotels).

As Iraq began to burn the oil fields of Kuwait (January 30), my exams were done and I had six weeks to explore China. I set out alone, obsessed with reaching Lhasa, Tibet. The Tibetan border had been sealed tight since 1989 after a bloody demonstration marking the thirty-year anniversary of the exile of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. The only way in and out was by paying exorbitant fees for a state led tour. Being a poor college student, I tried the other option—sneaking in.

First stop was Xian. My first night completely alone in a country of 1 billion was near the eighth wonder of the world, the Qin dynasty Terra Cotta warriors. I hit all the sights and continued westward, on to Xining, capital of Qinghai province. Here I laid my eyes on my first Tibetan. Excitement started to course through my veins as I was deep in historical Tibet, the Amdo region, and just miles from where, in 1935, the 14th Dalai Lama was born and where the headwaters of the Yellow River started their eastward journey.

I continued west, ignoring the Ta'er* monastery (unfortunately) in my excitement. I would find out later that this is where the Dalai Lama received his earliest training. Finally I was as far west as I could go - Golmud. The only way out was south to Lhasa, or back the way I had come. I begged and pleaded with the ticket agent to sell me a bus ticket for Lhasa. He repeatedly said "no-no bus to Lhasa." Finally I gave up. I had decided before that hitchhiking was too dangerous and out of the question, so I had to return to Lanzhou. The next morning I bought my ticket to Lanzhou and watched across the street as Tibetan after Tibetan climbed on the bus to Lhasa.

Back in Lanzhou, I hit another snag in my travel plans - Chinese New Year. Travel was literally at a standstill. The only train tickets were available on the

black market. I decided to fly to Chengdu on CAAC (which travelers had dubbed China Air Always Crashes). I saw the sights and still had three weeks till I was due back in Beijing. I hit the bus depot and my next stop was Leshan, home of the largest Buddha in the world. (The Taliban destroyed the second largest Buddha in 2001.) At a height of 233 feet, I was floored that anyone could build something this detailed and beautiful. Next was Emei Shan, one of the four sacred Buddhist Mountains in China. I hiked three days up and down the mountain, a total of 70km.

It was February 20; I still couldn't give up on Tibet. I decided to try western Sichuan, which is the historical Kham region of Tibet. The first stop was Ya'an. The next afternoon found me in Kangding, where a tributary of the Yangtze River raced through the middle of this mountain town. I explored the mountains and Buddhist temples, and enjoyed a service. I was deposited with some older women, and watched in awe at the blessings given by the local Lama. The next morning, the bus was delayed. While I waited I figured out why—the mountain pass was one way. During the morning, the traffic moved east. In the afternoon it moved west. As we continued, I tried not to look out the window, while the phrase ". . . and one American was on board" kept running through my head. I found out later that one of the peaks, Mt Gongga was listed at 24,790 feet. Mt Everest is listed at 29,035 feet.

Finally, we were in Garzi. The present day border of Tibet was 200-km westward and the source of the Mekong River a little beyond that. As I stepped off the bus, I saw the largest monastery I had ever seen. It wasn't the Potala, but it was huge. I was given a tour of the monastery by a monk who encouraged me to take photographs, especially of their portrait of the Dalai Lama, whose likeness was outlawed by the Chinese. I struggled to say thanks, he bowed and through our translator, a young teenager, whose Chinese was roughly as good as mine, urged me to tell the Dalai Lama that they were waiting for his return.

The next morning, I was ready to start back over the 700 km to Chengdu, a three-day journey. On March 1st, I had the best, longest, and hottest shower of my life—I hadn't washed my hair in two weeks. Then I went to a Western hotel for some food and coffee. I found an old *USA Today*, and read about the war which I hadn't heard about for five weeks. I had missed the whole war. Traveling through the foothills of the Himalayas, bisecting the origins of the Yangtze and Yellow rivers (just missing the Mekong river), seeing lands that few Americans, let alone foreigners, ever see, I experienced a rare, spiritual, beautiful, and amazing journey. My quest for Lhasa had failed, but my journey was an indescribable success.

Kellior's Mistake

I LOVE A GOOD STORY. Who doesn't? Although we loved the Harry Potter books, my daughter and I are completely consumed by listening to Jim Dale read them to us from the audio CDs. Anyone who has ever been to a Stone Circle gathering in Antrim County or listened to the Beach Bards on a Summer Friday at the Lelanau School knows that nothing is as moving as the spoken word delivered by someone who really knows how to connect. And for my money there is no better story teller than Garrison Kellior.

Kellior is always able to take a rambling tale that makes you smile and laugh, and in the end, bring you nearly to tears. He is entertaining and and moving in an uplifting way. But I don't listen to a *Prairie Home Companion* anymore, and it is Kellior himself who has made the break for me. He has made the ultimate mistake and entertainer can make, he has confused his talents at conveying emotion for an ability to persuade politically. It's a big club, and always a dead end. In the club are Rosie O'Donnell on the left and Tom Selleck on the right. Seen them in any great movies lately?

Kellior doesn't sweat his audience, so he really has nothing to lose. Still, his audience could be bigger. You could make the case that he is playing to the crowd; but I'm certain among the people who listen to Public Radio there are a fair share who don't like the creeping-in of largely political humor. Don't get me wrong, I love politics, and I pay attention to political news as some people watch sports. But when I'm listening to folk music and some story telling on a Sunday morning I don't want to hear thinly veiled jabs at any president. I don't think I'm alone. If he wants to join the political arena, he is welcome (I know more than a few people who would pay money to hear him from Noon to 3:00p.m. weekdays). But mixing a political message with his otherwise light entertainment reduces his audience, and creates an level of exclusivity that the spoken work doesn't need.

I'm an optimist. Against evidence to the contrary, I think that through recorded voice and story telling there is an opportunity to bring new listeners to the written word. People too lazy, busy or impaired to read books can discover what lies in those pages. As television continues to dominate our culture the great hope for writers is that their words can be read out loud.

I wish talented orators like Garrison Kellior would stay to their mission.

The following Spreadsheet was submitted by Ellen Monohan.

1/1/2003 Through 12/31/2003

Num	Date	Payee	Category	Amount	Running Balance
Opening Balance as of 1/1/2003					1,404.55
Month Ending 7/31/2003					
	7/18/2003	Opening Balance		0.00	1,404.55
	7/31/2003	tbe int	interest income	1.25	1,405.80
Total Month Ending 7/31/2003					1.25
Month Ending 8/31/2003					
	8/15/2003	90 members	noa for regular members	61.11	1,466.91
	8/15/2003	noa for family members	NDA for second family members	0.25	1,467.16
	8/15/2003	1 new members	noa for new members	1.00	1,468.16
	8/15/2003	8 corp subs	noa for corp subscriptions	5.20	1,473.36
	8/25/2003	cherry festival	volunteer income	350.00	1,823.36
	8/27/2003	Lotus Young	scholarship expense	(65.00)	1,758.36
	8/31/2003	tbe int	interest income	1.33	1,759.69
Total Month Ending 8/31/2003					353.89
Month Ending 9/30/2003					
	9/13/2003	93 members	noa for regular members	63.15	1,822.84
	9/13/2003	noa for family members	NDA for second family members	0.25	1,823.09
	9/13/2003	2 new members	noa for new members	2.00	1,825.09
	9/13/2003	noa for reinstated members	noa for reinstating members	1.00	1,826.09
	9/13/2003	8 corp subs	noa for corp subscriptions	5.20	1,831.29
	9/13/2003	5 tests	test fees	62.50	1,893.79
311	9/13/2003	Susan Styles	testing expenses	(3.85)	1,889.94
	9/30/2003	tbe int	interest income	1.56	1,891.50
Total Month Ending 9/30/2003					131.81
Month Ending 10/31/2003					
	10/15/2003	96 members	noa for regular members	65.18	1,956.68
	10/15/2003	1 family member	NDA for second family members	0.25	1,956.93
	10/15/2003	3 new members	noa for new members	3.00	1,959.93
	10/15/2003	8 corp subs	noa for corp subscriptions	5.20	1,965.13
	10/15/2003	3 tests	test fees	37.50	2,002.63
	10/31/2003	tbe int	interest income	1.73	2,004.36
Total Month Ending 10/31/2003					112.86
Month Ending 11/30/2003					
312	11/3/2003	Tom Kachadurian	newsletter postage	(123.82)	1,880.54
312	11/3/2003	Tom Kachadurian	newsletter preparations	(1.31)	1,879.23
313	11/3/2003	Susan Styles	testing expenses	(3.85)	1,875.38
	11/16/2003	noa	noa for regular members	66.54	1,941.92
	11/16/2003	noa for family members	noa for regular members	0.25	1,942.17
	11/16/2003	noa	noa for new members	2.00	1,944.17
	11/16/2003	noa	noa for corp subscriptions	5.20	1,949.37
	11/16/2003	4 tests	test fees	50.00	1,999.37
	11/30/2003	tbe int	interest income	1.72	2,001.09
Total Month Ending 11/30/2003					(3.27)
Grand Total				596.54	2,001.09

Roaming the Region

by Charlie Bruce (aka Gloater)

Well, the holidays are just about over, or at least they will be when you read this. Me, I'm writing this from November in order to meet deadlines. At least Thanksgiving is definitely over. I took the week off to visit my daughter in Oklahoma City and it was a very thankful week.

But upon my return I find that Scott Rainey, RVC of Region 8, has championed his region into the lead in ProxyQuest. I feel like I just took a Queen of Spades or something. Hopefully, when you do read this we'll be back on top. I am in the process of sending out emails to all available addresses requesting you to submit your proxy. You've read about it, you know why we need it, so make like Nike and "Just Do It." (<http://www.proxy.us.mensa.org>) If you don't know about ProxyQuest, just email me and ask. I'll be more than happy to clue you in.

Also by this time the Cincinnati RG will have come and gone as well as the AMC meeting in conjunction with the RG in New Orleans. But coming up, if you're not signed up yet is are Region 4's "The RG Junkies' RG" in Indianapolis, January 30 to -February 1; Dayton's DAMNations 17, April 2 - -4; and Southeast Michigan's SEMMantics XXVI, April 30 - -May 2. Additional information is on the Region 3 website (<http://www.region3.us.mensa.org>). If you haven't yet attended a Mensa Regional Gathering, check out one of these, I'm sure you'll have a great time.

Finally, the Region 3 Leadership Development Workshop is scheduled for February 28th. It is targeted for those of you who want to get involved in Mensa as well as those who are involved. Learn to be a better, more effective leader and to be better informed about Mensa activities and operation. Watch for upcoming details on the Region 3 web site. Have a Happy New Year.

Northern Michigan Mensa Executive Committee

VOTING MEMBERS

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At-Large Member:	Melissa Rennie		

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



Borealis

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