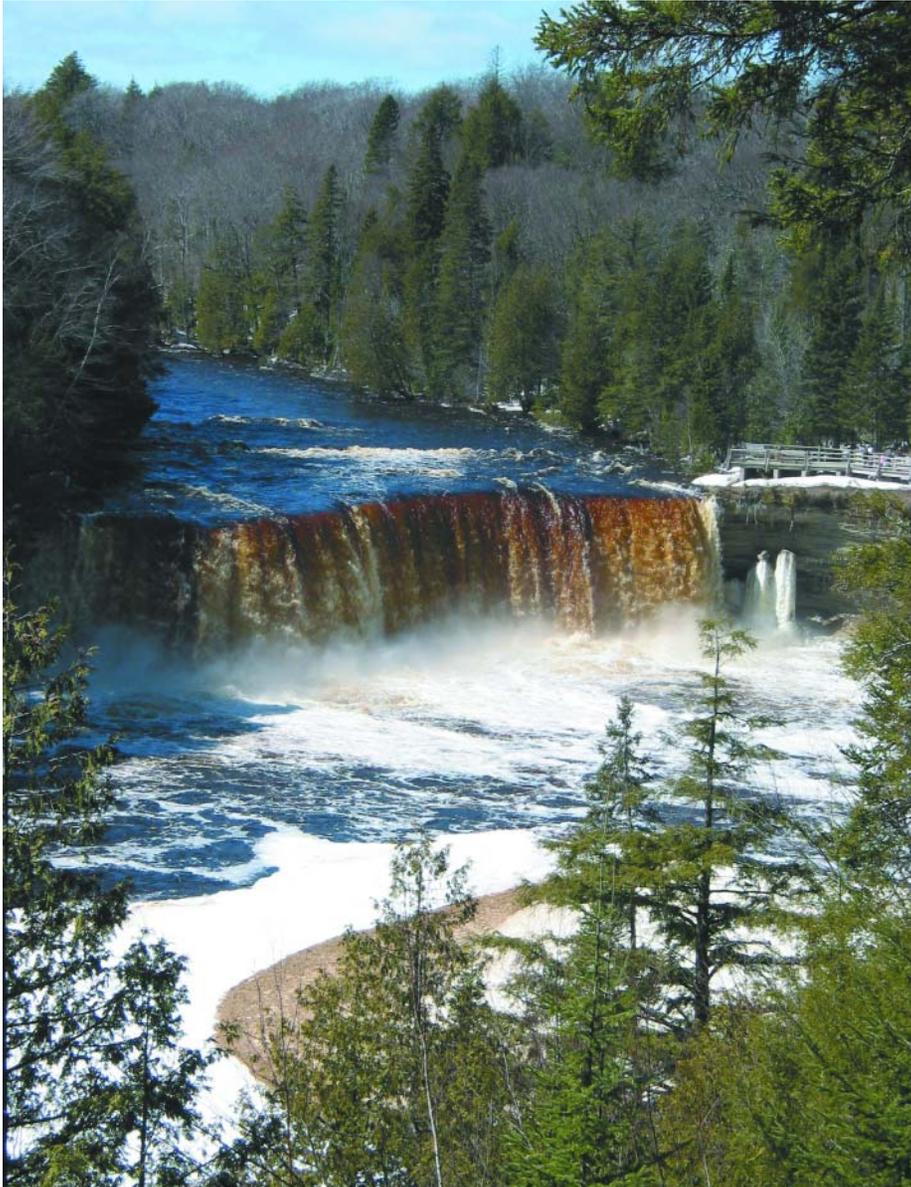




Borealis

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*

Thomas Kachadurian

P.O. Box 3434

Traverse City, MI 49685

Northern Michigan Mensa

May 2004 Calendar

Saturday, May 8

Wildflower Hike and Picnic or Lunch at Friendly Tavern, 10:00 a.m.

Jack Schultz, our "resident naturalist," will again lead us on a trek to see some of northern Michigan's finest spring wildflowers. We'll be going to the Treat Farm in Sleeping Bear Dunes, just south of the village of Empire in Leelanau County. Those who are up for it will go beyond the major wildflower area, which is in a beautiful northern hardwood forest area, and then continue on to climb Old Baldy. That is the highest point of land just south of the Empire Bluffs and provides spectacular views out over Platte Bay and Lake Michigan.

We suggest that those who want to do the entire hike should bring along a trail lunch and beverage (especially extra water), and those who want only to see the wildflowers can go into Empire for lunch at the Friendly Tavern after we all explore the wildflower area. Plan to meet at the trailhead at 10 a.m. It is at the end of Norconk Road, which runs west from Highway M-22 approximately 1.25 miles south of the Empire village limits. (Don't confuse it with Wilco Road which heads west to the Empire Bluffs and is about a quarter mile north of Norconk Road.) Early blooming flowers, including Dutchmen's Breeches, Jack-in-the-pulpit, spring beauties, are to be seen in plenty. This is a "must-see" area and you'll want to return year after year. Jack says it is the best area he knows of in all of northern Michigan to enjoy spring wildflowers. Call him for details and directions if necessary: 231-275-6735.

Monday, May 10

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 10:00.

Each games night we will try a different game theme. I've gotten no report from last month, but I think it's time to try some trivia games.

Friday, May 28

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.

Strange Doing in Columbus

By Sue Styles

AT THE END OF FEBRUARY, Jack Schultz, Melissa Rennie, Margaret Scott, and I went to the Region 3 Leadership Development Workshop in Columbus, Ohio. The schedule of educational sessions looked good, and with some food and games thrown in, we figured it would be a lot of fun — like our local get-togethers, times 3 or so. Attendance was expected to be about 60 Mensans from around the region, which includes part or all of New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. We knew we would be the new kids on the block, being from a new local group as well as new to our positions and/or to Mensa itself. We were right about that, but being new, we were also wrong about quite a few things!

First of all, this wasn't a nice, organized, tame little event. It was a pretty raucous gathering, mostly of self-described "junkies" who attend a regional event about once a month to catch up on the gossip and the love. Yes, love. Regional gatherings and other events are a big part of the social circle of many junkies, and they date each other, share the trials and tribulations of kids, spouses, exes, and significant others, and check your left hand to see where you fit in the spectrum of life. Not that they aren't nice and interesting people, they were just a little closer to each other than we all are up here.

However, attendees didn't come for just a frivolous social gathering. These people were serious about important things like Hearts, eating, drinking, and of course, Mensa (more on that later). We expected to learn to play RVC Charlie Bruce's favorite game, Double-Deck Cancellation Hearts, and we did. Some of us also acquired special Hearts "names" to be known by, since we apparently weren't given appropriate names by our parents. I can better remember some of the people we met by their Hearts names than by their given names. There were Derf, Black Widow, Rasputin, the Duchess, and more. And while we played Hearts, people ate. And they ate. And they ate some more. They had enough snack food, candy, baked goods, and other food to feed two or three groups of people, and I have never seen such a variety of sodas and juices in my life outside of a grocery store. I think the person in charge of the food must work at Sam's Club! I have to say it was nice to have my choice of Coke or

Pepsi rather than relying on the person organizing an event to have the same taste in soda that I do.

More to the point, I was pleasantly surprised at the similarities and differences between the larger local groups and our own NMM. I expected the larger groups to be extremely well-organized, with volunteers to fill all the recommended as well as necessary positions, and charismatic, experienced, talented leaders at the helm. However, the LocSec of Columbus Area Mensa told me they didn't even have a proctor coordinator, and tested prospective members infrequently. Two other LocSecs talked about the difficulty in planning events that would appeal to everyone, and I came to understand that other groups are challenged in some of the same ways we are. In spite of having a larger pool of members, they also have members with busy lives and multiple priorities, they debate the reasons Mensa should exist and what it should do, and they often only have 1-2 events per month with attendance of 10-15 people. We're doing pretty well, folks! Not just in ProxyQuest, but in many other ways, we're "playing with the big dogs!"

For that was the most important thing about attending the LDW. Not only did we meet some of the national office staff and get pointers from other local group officers, we showed everyone that NMM is serious about Mensa. They have heard about our growth in membership and seen us at the top of the ProxyQuest lists, but a showing of four people driving 450 miles to learn more about the ins and outs of the organization put our "money where our mouth is" in their minds. It is one thing to have our games nights, brunches, and TGIFs, and another to venture outside of our local group to commune with other Mensans. It was definitely an educational experience.

Over the Top

WE HAVE FINALLY BROKEN THE 100 MARK. Membership, as of March 31, was 104 members, although this may change at the end of April because 23 members have not renewed. A few members have told members of the ExComm why they are not renewing, and we really appreciate the effort. If anyone chooses not to renew, please drop a line to a member of the ExComm. We really appreciate the feedback. If you have just forgotten to renew, the easiest way to renew is online (www.us.mensa.org).

Members that have moved into the area include Robert Hawley, Shelly Schellenberg and Gerald Greene. New members are Joshua Bostwick and Thomas Slater. We are looking forward to meeting all the new members.

Cultural Quest (CQ) was a great success. NMM sponsored three out of 113 teams nationwide. We all met after the quiz for dinner at South City Limits. Consensus of the group was that this was a much better test and that any flaws in performance can be traced to the test takers, rather than the the CQ creators. We should have the results of how our teams ranked in a few months.

I participated in CQ this year, but in a much different way. I met the 2004 CQ Coordinator, Eliot Kieval, in an on-line SIGs (Special Interest Group). He enlisted my help to help edit the test for clarity and other issues. It was great fun. SIGs are a wonderful opportunity to explore other aspects of Mensa. I belong to two official online SIGs and a couple unofficial SIGs. It has been fun meeting other Mensans from all over the country and, in a couple cases, all over the world. My online experience has also motivated me to attend SEMMantics, Southeastern Michigan Mensa's Regional

Gathering (RG). There are some Mensans who's only contact with Mensa is through RG's and are commonly referred to as RG junkies. According to some of the junkies I met in Columbus, SEMMantics is a great introduction to the RG world.

Monthly events are still well attended. Feel free to stop by for a brunch, games night or TGIF. Of course, as the weather improves, we will be having more outdoor events. Some of my favorites are the hikes. Keep an eye on the calendar to see when these events are scheduled.



ABOVE: Team Schultz before the test. Note the bright happy faces. BELOW: After the quiz, those of us with any self-esteem remaining at South City Limits for solace and post-mortem.



-Melissa J. Rennie

Live Healthier, Wealthier and Sexier

by Dr. M. Teri Daunter, Ph.D

RESEARCH OF OVER 140 YEARS has made it obvious that a healthy marriage is good for your health and well-being. As a veteran Psychologist of 23 years with a specialty area in Marriage and Family therapy, I have made it a point to follow the research on the effects of marriage on overall health. A stable and loving marriage, one based on respect and love, can add years to your living. People who are happily married show a real age differentiation of as much as 6.5 years younger than their unmarried contemporaries. Throughout these many years of research, indications have been strong that married couples live longer and have fewer physical and psychological illnesses than unmarried people. Furthermore, they experience greater economic security. Nationally, only 11% of married couples fall below the poverty line; 40% of single parent households fall below the poverty line. I suppose, then, that marriage is like a life preserver; it provides a safety factor not just for the married couple but for the taxpayer and society at large.

A healthy loving relationship actually boosts immunity. For example, if your spouse has cancer, his or her chance of dying from the disease is lowered by as much as being in an age category ten years younger. On the other hand, divorced individuals have been shown to have much lower levels of immune function.

Research has shown that marriage reduces the risk of heart disease. Heart disease reduces a person's life expectancy by just under six years. Being unmarried reduces a person's life expectancy by almost ten years. Even if these research figures are not exact, the general findings in over a century of research indicate that marriage is good for your health. This happens because stress hormones are kept low. When the stress hormone cortisol increases with the increase of stress, health is affected in an adverse way. Even language used between a couple can affect these cortisol levels.

Women especially seem to be most sensitive to the language of the heart. Negative communications within a couple system causes a greater effect in the cortisol level of a woman over that of a man. A woman is often the barometer of a relationship. Kiecolt-Glaser, professor and director of health psychology at the Ohio State University College of Medicine followed a group of 90 women for a period of time. She discovered that women with cortisol

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increases were two to three times more likely to be divorced within 10 years. Men's cortisol levels did not seem to predict the same outcome. She presented these findings at last year's APA conference. What this is saying to us is that women tend to have a stronger response than men to marital conflict. This is why they are often the ones who will determine whether they will stay in or end a marital relationship.

The rank of healthiness, in both mental and physical categories, seems to run in this way based on the research: First runner up is a married man; second runner up is a married woman; third runner up is single woman and fourth runner up is a single man. Being married or unmarried seems to have a greater effect on men especially as they approach 50 years of age. At this point if men are single or divorced, there seems to be a decline in their health which takes place much faster than for men who are married.

Marriage tends to change people for the better. When you need to start considering someone other than yourself, this altruism tends to have a positive benefit on the person's overall personality. The person develops a thoughtfulness and compassion that is not often there in most single people. There is something enhancing knowing that you have a support system and that you are not going home to an empty house again and again and again. There is something satisfying in knowing you have someone with a stake in the relationship who is willing to provide you the space to bounce off ideas. It is very healthy knowing that you have permission to express yourself and that you are in an environment when at times you can say no. The teamwork in a marriage enhances health knowing that a person does not have to do it alone. So communication in a marriage is critical and a foundation to all the work that couples must do. Without communication there is nothing—it is truly like building a house on a foundation of sand. It eventually collapses.

Married couples also often have a greater social circle, so consequently they have a greater support system than their single counterparts. Married couples bring couple friends and friends from their individual lives into their relationship. It triples the support system over that of a single person.

A married couple tends to be more productive. This may be due to the need of supporting a family. Being married provides a couple something "bigger and more important than themselves for which to live". The American Psychiatric Association concluded that "the principal cause of fatigue in the world today, and most particularly in the United States, is the failure of people to have something that seems bigger and more important than themselves for which to live". Having a partner stretches us. This team work fuels a couple and pulls the couple exponentially in purpose and direction.

Married couples fare better financially as well. They build more wealth together than if they were single. The average married couple at retirement typ-

ically has accumulated assets of \$410,000. Single persons have accumulated assets at retirement of \$167,000 and a divorced person typically has accumulated assets of \$154,000.

Married couples are less lonely than their single counterparts. They show less depression, anxiety and less overall psychological distress than single people. The suicide rate is lower in married people than in single people. Research has consistently shown that being married gives individuals a mental health boost. If couple's dreams are packed full of happy expectations, they will come back to them like a health boomerang.

The single life is highly overrated by television and the media in general. Married people are happier than single people. This has been supported through international studies. Steven Stack and J. Ross Eshleman did a study in 17 developed nations and found that "married persons have a higher level of happiness than persons who are not married," even after they controlled for gender, age, education, children, church attendance, financial satisfaction, and self-reported health. These findings have been consistent across nations.

As a bonus the research has also shown that married people are more sexually satisfied physically and emotionally. Popular lore sensationalizes the multiple relationships of the single life style. Yet married men have consistently reported that they are more satisfied sexually than single men.

In marital therapy I always recommend the following to enhance a marital relationship:

- Take 20-minutes each evening after the children go to bed to catch up with one another.
- Schedule a weekly date night. We have been married 36 years, and Friday night is still our date night and we have done this since we had young children. Now our children are adult and independent. Make this a ritual.
- Develop as many communication skills as possible, and keep language respectful. Don't hit below the belt with your language. Don't do a character assassination. Stay focused on the issues and not on the personality.
- Romance every day and not just on Valentine's day . . . if you want to feel, while married, the way you felt when you were dating, then do the little things you did during your courtship.

Marriage should be the beginning, but most people make it the end. They get too comfortable. Yet, it is important to note that just as good marriages can go bad, there are as many bad marriages that go good. If a couple recognizes the value of a marriage, rather than the dubious joys of divorce and single life, they can make it work. Nothing of quality happens without effort.

Roaming the Region

by Charlie Bruce (aka Gloater)

My apologies to the editors with the early deadlines. I'm several days late in submitting this and am actually writing it while at the Dayton RG (a great RG by the way for those of you that missed it.) March was a heck of a month for me. I wrapped up a great LDW; moved offices at work (with all associated files and junk) and found out I had a project revision where I need to have 5 iterations crammed down into a 2 iteration bag; and moved into a new condo on a day that it decided to snow 5 inches. Throw into that mess an extended weekend in Virginia for the quarterly AMC meeting . . . Anyway, sorry I'm late. Some of you may not be reading this because of it.

The good news is that I'll probably not be pestering asking you to submit your proxies anymore. At the end of March, the numbers dropped to reflect the current actual membership and the proxies associated with it. As most of us had anticipated, the ratio was in our favor. Regionally we fell from 5217 members to 4193. While that seems like a lot, we still had the best retention percentage. (Now you see why I sent out that reminder email; even so, some of you still procrastinated and may also not be reading this because of it.) The proxies, on the other hand, only dropped from 3157 to a current 2852. So we are now at 68%. (We kicked Proxy butt.)

Nationally, we fell from 52,398 members to 40,856 and proxies from about 26,870 to 24,460. Bottom line is we are now just under 60%. If we get 8,000 new members before the annual business meeting and NONE of them submit their proxy, we STILL have over 50%. Way to go Mensa.

One last topic I'd like to address is that we have 8 groups in our region that have not yet submitted candidates for the National Nominating Committee. If anyone out there is interested in getting more involved in Mensa and would like to serve on this committee, please contact your Local Secretary or me for further information.

Got to go now, it's time for the Hearts tournament. Have a nice April.

Northern Michigan Mensa Executive Committee

VOTING MEMBERS

Local Secretary:	Sherry McNamara	231-933-9272	kikiwon@hotmail.com
Deputy Local Secretary:	Susan A. Styles	231-943-4349	seas@umich.edu
Treasurer:	Ellen Monahan	231-929-9281	emonahan@chartermi.net
At-Large Member:	John D. Schultz	231-275-6735	nwoodpc@chartermi.net
At-Large Member:	Melissa Rennie	231-889-0892	renmeij@yahoo.com

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Membership Officer:	Melissa Rennie	231-889-0892	renmeij@yahoo.com
Proctor Coordinator and Proctor:	John D. Schultz	231-275-6735	nwoodpc@chartermi.net
Newsletter Editor	Thomas Kachadurian	231-947-4328	kachadurian@chartermi.net
Program Coordinator:	Sherry McNamara	231-933-9272	kikiwon@hotmail.com
Publicity Coordinator:	Susan A. Styles	231-943-4349	seas@umich.edu
S.I.G.H.T. Coordinator:	Ralph K. Hillquist	231-882-0233	rkhillquist@chartermi.net
Ombudsman:	Peter J. Turkus	231-941-8321	petencheri@chartermi.net
Webmasters:	Joshua L. Ockert	269-762-0500	torstenvl@yahoo.com
	Stephen C. Siciliano	231-947-1480	mrtak9@ameritech.net

Regional Vice Chairman	Charles Bruce	614-237-4228	rvc3@us.mensa.org
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Northern Michigan Mensa

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send address corrections c/o
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