

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 3 Number 11

August 2005

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. 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 when a person submits material with a restriction that it be published "as is or not at all". It will be assumed that the editor has permission to edit for length and clarity unless the author specifies the submission is to be printed "as is". In such cases, it will include an editor's note stating it as such.

That a person has written and submitted something to the newsletter is not, in itself, sufficient reason for its publication. It is the editor's discretion whether to publish any submission, with the exception of mandatory items.

All submissions are welcome and encouraged. They may be sent via email or snail mail. They may be sent as attachments or in the body of the email.

Submissions requiring major editing are also welcome. If requested, the author may approve the editing before the article is published.

Photographs are also welcome. Please include a brief description of the photo, and the name of the photographer. You may also include an entire article to accompany the photo.

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.nmm.us.mensa.org

ON THE COVER: Relaxing for lunch during the Cedar River canoe/kayak trip. Picture taken by Jack Schultz.

Northern Michigan Mensa

August 2005 Calendar

BOOK CLUB – Saturday, 6 August, 2005 at 12:30 p.m. We will meet at the Omelette Shoppe, 1209 E. Front Street. The book for discussion this month is *Alias Grace*, by Margaret Atwood. This group is open to all members, attendance can be each meeting, or only for those meetings that present books in which you have an interest.

CANOE/KAYAK TRIP ON THE BETSIE RIVER - Saturday, 13 August, 2005. Meet at 10 a.m. at the King Road bridge over the Betsie River, just north of the village of Thompsonville (near Crystal Mountain Resort). King Road crosses County Road 669 which runs between M-115 south of Thompsonville and the state fish hatchery on US 31 east of Honor. Bring a lunch and beverage as well as clothing to protect you from sunburn. Sunscreen would also be advised, and you might want insect repellent. The trip will take between three and four hours, and we'll set out on County Line Road (along the Manistee-Benzie County line) just west of Crystal Mountain Resort. This is a one-way trip, so we will need to shuttle vehicles, leaving some at the takeout point and the others where we start. Please arrive promptly so we can arrange these shuttles. The road distance is only 8 miles, but the river travels more than that because of many twists and turns. The current is faster than the section of the Betsie on which we traveled last year in July. Please bring life jackets if you have them. Jack Schultz will again lead the trip.

ANNUAL PARTY, POTLUCK, AND CAMPOVER – Saturday, 20 August 2005, arrive at 12:00 noon and plan to eat about 1:00 p.m. The big bash will be at Jill Daniel's home located at 2260 NW Bayshore Drive, Suttons Bay. Directions from Traverse City are to take NW Bayshore/M-22 to Suttons Bay. When you reach the flashing light as you enter the village, travel approximately 3.5 miles further north on M-22 past Belanger Creek to Jill's home (on the right side/bay side of road). She will have signs at the end of the driveway so you can't miss it. Our hostess will provide soup and bread, Fred is making chili and there is a deep well - untreated water. We will also have paper plates and cups available. Please bring a dish to pass, your own table setting, and your

own pop/drinks. A refrigerator will be available if needed. If you are bringing a hot dish, please bring it in something that can be plugged into the electric power (crock pot, electric skillet, hot plates), as she does not have adequate oven/range capacity. Jill has a large bay front property and this party is potentially an all night extravaganza. If you would like to camp over night, please bring a camper or tent as Jill and Fred are making cleared areas for overnight guests. They have 2 setup tents: 1-two person tent and 1-four person tent (or how many - who knows?). If you would like to swim, kayak, canoe, or just play on the beach, bring your necessary toys for this. The beach is rocky, so you may want to bring beach shoes or sandals. Also, please bring lawn/beach chairs or you will have to sit on the ground. She'll even make a campfire for those who are staying the evening. Bring any games you want to play. NO dogs, NO guns! Fireworks are ok. There might even be some wine tasting if it can be arranged.

This is THE party of year; don't miss it!!!

THE GOOSES EAT CRACKED CORN: A NOTE FROM FRED WHO ONCE BROUGHT THE WRONG KIND.

TGIF – Friday, 26 August 2005, at 6:00 p.m. We will meet in the Horizon Shine Café, located in the lower level of Horizon Books, 243 E. Front Street, Traverse City. Coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches, wraps, and desserts are available for purchase.

From the Editor

Here we are into August already. I think we are definitely making up for the unusually cold Summer we had last year. I hope you are all having a wonderful break from the snow and cold. I know I am. I only wish I were able to attend more Mensa events. It seems like every time there is a Mensa gathering I would like to join, I already have a prior commitment to be somewhere else. Alas, life is difficult to predict or plan well.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has submitted articles, items, etc. to the newsletter. Without all of you, this publication would be very sparse. It would likely end up consisting of my poems and thoughts on life, and no one wants that. As it is, I will try to limit the printing of my poems to those occasions when I need something to fill space so we don't end up with a blank page or two at the end of the newsletter.

While I appreciate all submissions, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have been frequent contributors. Ruth Minshull seems to have a never-ending supply of wonderful stories or observations for us all to enjoy. Melissa Rennie entertains us with descriptions of her trips to annual gatherings, or important social issues. We have always been able to count on Charlie Bruce and his RVC articles (Good luck in your new position, Charlie). I hope we will be seeing the same kind of input from Alan Baltis in the future. Jack Schultz can always be counted on to send me several photos to choose from. I only wish I could use them all. And, of course, we can't forget Sherry McNamara who, without fail, compiles our list of events for the month so we all know what is coming up and when.

I'm sure other members have submitted several items in the past, but these are the ones I have observed since I took over three months ago. Keep those submissions coming everyone. I can never have too much to choose from.

Kelleen Bingham

Members Needed for the Nominating Committee

Northern Michigan Mensa is approaching the end of its second term of officers. Therefore, it is essential that we begin the process of preparing for the new administration.

In order to facilitate this transition, we need a team willing to work as the Nominating Committee. The committee will consist of three members who are NOT currently VOTING (elected) members of the Executive Committee and who will NOT be candidates for any of the five VOTING member positions on the Executive Committee in the upcoming election. The members of the Nominating Committee MAY be candidates for NON-VOTING positions on the next Executive Committee, however.

Your role, if you choose to volunteer for the Nominating Committee, will require that you determine a slate of candidates for the 2006-2007 term of the elected Executive Committee. You will be responsible for nominating candidates for each elected position of the Executive Committee and notifying the membership of these candidates.

While your work will be short-term, it will nonetheless be an important and integral component of the future of NMM. The committee must be formed by early September and will be working in this capacity until the end of the nominating process in November.

If you are a member who is seeking an important role, but don't have an inclination or time to be on the Executive Committee, yet you want to have some hand in the direction of Northern Michigan Mensa, please consider volunteering for this committee. If you are interested in this, please email me at kikiwon@hotmail.com, or call me at 933.9272. The first three members who volunteer will be the official Nominating Committee, so don't hesitate if this is something you want to do.

Sherry McNamara
Local Secretary

New Site Under Construction

~~Roaming the Region~~ by Charlie Bruce

a.k.a. Gloater

RVC Region 3 (RVC3@us.mensa.org)

Well it's been fun, but it's time to move on. Since I didn't officially say goodbye last month, Alan has graciously agreed to let me use the front end of the RVC column for my farewells. Thanks for all of your support these past two years; I'm sure you'll do the same for Alan. So without further ado, farewell.

Hello, everyone! Alan Baltis here, your newly-elected (if such a term applies to a single-candidate race after Rick Magnus graciously dropped out) Regional Vice Chair for our glorious Great Lakes region 3. My HUGE thanks to Charlie Bruce for being such an able RVC over the last few years, and my best wishes to him in his new role as Treasurer. I'm looking forward to working even more with such a smart, decent fellow!

I'm still relatively new at this position, but let me give you a bit of background on me so that you can have some reasonable expectations of me. I've been in Mensa for almost 30 years, and more than 20 years consecutively since getting out of college. I was the LocSec for Chicago Area Mensa for 3 terms back in the 90s, a blessing because Chicago is (as a member from another city once told me) "Mensa done right," and I internalized many good lessons on working with brilliant, opinionated people in an all-volunteer organization. Let me tell you, it ain't like corporate America, which is where I spend my working hours as a computer consultant. And thank the gods for that!

I haven't come into this position on any big political platform, so don't expect me to be breathing fire at AMC meetings from the get-go. Having said that, I deeply believe that Mensa must be a members-focused group, and we have, in my opinion, seen some straying towards a more hierarchical/corporate/conservative atmosphere over the course of the last 10 years or so. I will strive to always be a voice for Mensa members, asking how every proposal affects and especially *benefits* members, and using such criteria to judge the relative value of what we're contemplating at the AMC level.

Having said that, I know that the AMC and I have a lot to learn about each other, and by my not having been deeply involved in Mensa at the national level before now, I'm sure that there's tons of information to which I have not been privy. I promise to not just knee-jerk in a different direction, but to drink in as much data as I can so that my contributions are always as well informed and well reasoned as I can make them. And I promise to share all that I can with you of the how and why and wherefore of decisions that are being made, so that you can be confident that the AMC are not living in some ivory tower, but are members, just like you, trying our best to be good stewards for this wonderful Smart Thing of Ours.

Okay, more in a month after my first official AMC meeting down in New Orleans. To quote one of the great men of our times, Stan Lee, the creator of much of what Marvel Comics is today, "With great power comes great responsibility."

Questions/advice/just want to share something? Please send me a message using the RVC3@us.mensa.org email address, which will be transferred from Charlie to me any day now.

Excelsior!

Member News

Send me any news you would like to share with other members. Let us know what special events are happening in your life.

Not Too Much, Not Too Little

By
Ruth Minshull

We were playing cards with a new, plastic deck. My granddaughter kept dealing with too much force and the cards would sail across the table and onto the floor. After she did this several times, I said, "You know, there's an ability you might call evaluation of energy."

"What's that?"

"In this case the question would be: how much energy do I need in order to get this card across the table? Since these are new, and not scuffed up, they are more slithery; so they slide with very little effort. It's easy to overshoot and send the card sailing onto the floor."

"Yes, I know. But how can I do it better?"

"First you need to change your old idea of how much energy you need to use. Start by simply dropping each card in front of the player. Later you can toss it, gently, and get it in the right spot. You'll soon work out just how much force you need."

She caught on immediately, and no more cards hit the floor.

You could call this concept by any number of names. It's basically a matter of making a correct judgment: how much effort do I need to accomplish the objective? It can apply to many activities.

When I was first learning to drive, I steered violently. I'd veer sharply to the right, then overcorrect and careen across the road to the left. Fortunately I got the hang of it before I smashed into a tree or an oncoming car. I then needed to make the same type of adjustment for accelerating and braking. We've all learned these things, and eventually we drive smoothly without thinking about it.

If we are teaching a child to play catch, we must throw the ball with just enough effort to reach him. He will learn to catch, but also he must learn how to throw the ball back with the right amount of push--not too hard, not too weak

I've noticed that if I really dislike a project, I put off confronting it as long as possible; it seems an insurmountable task (preparing income tax returns, cleaning out the garage--each a particular *bête noire* of mine). And yet, when I actually get to it, the job is seldom as difficult as I had expected it to be. So, we not only use too much (or too little) energy

doing a certain thing, we can burn up a lot of useless mental effort in dreading it.

And then there is the matter of our speech--too much, too little, too loud, too soft. I think there's an unwritten rule that every restaurant meal must be enhanced by the strident gum beating of the Loud Talker. He/she can be sitting clear across the room, yet we hear every penetrating syllable. This person has never learned to adjust the volume of his voice to reach his listener—and no one else. Instead, he bellows to the room at large (a would-be actor playing to the balcony?). Furthermore, these windbags are never giving out hot stock market tips or divulging the secret of life. No, they are merely monopolizing the airwaves with mind-numbing prattle.

Many people also misestimate the volume needed to talk on a cell phone. I hear them in restaurants (The rude dolts!) on the street, in the supermarkets and department stores. In fact, there's even a name for this phenomenon; they call it *cell yell*.

On the other end of the energy scale is the Low Talker who never speaks up enough to be heard by the intended listener. I hate having to ask (repeatedly) what a person said. Sometimes these people are simply failing to adjust to the surrounding noise level, but many are just habitual Low Talkers.

Also, we often misestimate the amount of energy required to handle others. For instance, some people invent elaborate spiels to get rid of telemarketers. I learned that I don't need to listen to the whole pitch; I don't need to cook up stories or jokes. It's just as effective, and a lot less effort, to simply say "no" and hang up.

If you are invited to an event and you don't want to go, don't bother to offer an excuse. Just say, "I'm sorry, I can't make it." I have been surprised to discover that almost everyone accepts this. It'll work for practically any goings-on from a coronation to a mud fight. Most stories (lies?) require too much wasted energy; we don't need them anyway.

Life is simpler when we get this worked out. We need just enough effort to do the job. Not too much. Not too little.

AG's and Hurricanes

What to do when your first AG is bookended between a tropical storm and a hurricane?

In the flurry of activity to finish work, pack and catch an early morning plane, the last thing on my mind was what the weather would actually be like when I arrived to the mysterious fun of an AG. So after I had arrived at the hotel in New Orleans on the Fourth of July and met up with some friends of mine, some one mentioned Cindy. Earlier my friends had mentioned that they would forewarn me if any tropical weather was scheduled to interfere with our plans, so I was a little surprised to hear that Cindy might be headed towards us. But they said, it was still a day or two off and it was "only a tropical storm." So without a second thought, we headed out to dinner and down to the riverwalk to enjoy the dueling barges fireworks display.

Since one of my friends (Heather Miller, chairperson of the AG) was staying in the 49th floor penthouse suite, we naturally decided to head for high ground after the fireworks. After hours of enjoying the company of old friends and meeting new friends, it was off to bed. We awoke the next morning to a drizzly, misting sky and headed for the Audobon Aquarium of the Americas to spend the morning inside. But when on vacation, it is hard to spend much time inside, so we headed over to the Audobon zoo on the ferry hoping that the afternoon would bring sunshine.

We tried not to be concerned when the ferry captain announced that the 3 p.m. return trip would most likely take place, but the 5 p.m. return trip was dependent on the weather. I must admit that after the first hour in a constant drizzle, you hardly notice that it is raining any more. In fact, we had so much fun that we stayed until the zoo closed at 5 p.m. and returned to the hotel in a New Orleans' streetcar.

After a quick bite to eat, we had to decide what was the perfect thing to do in New Orleans as a tropical storm is pending. A couple of friends decided to take the opportunity to see Ted Nugent at the House of Blues. Since I knew that I might have another chance to see the north woods rocker, I was looking for something a little different. The answer - touring cemeteries by candlelight and a haunted pub tour, of course. The tour had been arranged by a friend, Maria Sawczuk, locsec of Delaware Mensa (and a good friend). So we headed down to a classic Irish pub

(O'Flaherty's, to be specific), and loaded up in a tour van as both darkness and the rain fell.

As the wind and rain picked up, our tour-guide, Rudy Raven, led us through our first cemetery. I must say, he took having a dozen Mensans in a van in good strides, since it quickly turned into one pun after another and left many of us in near hysterics from laughing so hard. After the first inch of rain or so, some of us decided that sandals were not the best foot attire to be hiking through cemeteries, so we did the rest of the tour barefoot. Although the thought of running around barefoot in a cemetery at night during a tropical storm might creep some people out, it was actually a lot of fun.

As the street lights flickered on and off, and the rain came in sideways under the umbrellas, Rudy explained the work that a lot of people were doing in New Orleans to preserve the old cemeteries. He also pointed out that a portion of our tour fee would be forwarded to help preserve the "Oddfellows Rest" cemetery. He also explained the origin of each cemetery and the type of individuals who were buried in each, from the standard Catholic Cemeteries (named after the parish church), to the "Gates of Prayer" Jewish Cemetery, the "Oddfellows Rest" cemetery and finally New Orleans' Potters Field.

As the rain continued to pour down, and the wind continued to pick up, we headed back to O'Flahertys for some refreshment and to hear the sad story of Angelique, an octoroon mistress, who was thrown from the second floor window to the fountain below. She is believed to be buried near the fountain, but she is said to still haunt the pub, occasionally making appearances on the second floor when a good Irish band is playing below. Her lover would also kill himself a few weeks later. It is said that he isn't in as good of spirits when he appears. As the midnight hour neared, and Cindy was in her full fury, we had to decide the best way to get back to the hotel. After a friend called around for a couple cabs, a few of us decided to make a run for it. Actually we strolled back, walking down Decatur, which intersects with Canal, with me in my bare feet on freshly washed sidewalks.

I think that in the middle of a tropical storm is the only time I would choose to walk anywhere in New Orleans barefoot. The friends who headed back in a cab pulled up and asked if we wanted a ride, but we

turned them down. We were soaked, and once you're wet, you're wet. After a quick change, we again headed for the penthouse suite as we watched the full flavor of a tropical storm come in from the gulf. After a couple of hours of arguing about whether or not the swaying we felt at the top floor was due to the storm or liquid refreshment, falling into to bed and being gently rocked to sleep concluded for me that the storm was actually rocking the hotel.

The next few days were spent in a flurry of activity to ensure that we were able to fit in every bit of New Orleans that we needed to see, and participate in the activities of the AG. The highlights included listening to Big Kevin explain the history and intricacies of gumbo, jambalaya, and pralines at the New Orleans School of Cooking on Wednesday. The best part being of course - eating the class work.

That afternoon, a friend and I wandered the French Market looking for a deli and bakery. Luckily, we stumbled across a wonderful bakery that baked a dozen baguettes for the GenX wine tasting I was hosting that night. We didn't have as much luck with the deli though. I was able to find Central Grocery; however, it was closed because of the tropical storm the night before (I returned for Thursday's lunch to enjoy their famous muffaletta sandwich). I had to settle for a local grocery store to buy the cheese for the wine tasting event. Of course, we had to take a moment out of our schlepping to partake in a cafe au lait and beignets at Cafe de Monde - no trip to New Orleans would be complete without it.

The wine tasting event was a smashing success. GenXers from all over the country brought local and regional wine to share with each other. I can't even recall how many wines we had. The wines I chose (including the Sandpiper from L. Mawby and Chateau Grand Traverse's semidry Johannisberg Riesling) went quickly.

Of course, no trip to New Orleans would be complete without spending at least one night on Bourbon Street. It was twice as enjoyable spending two nights listening to the blues that give Bourbon Street its reputation. The GenX SIG (Special Interest Group) that I am active in hosted two pub crawls, and both managed to find great places to hear the blues. I must add that traveling down Bourbon Street at night is an experience best enjoyed with a group of friends. I wouldn't have ventured out on my own to enjoy this local venue.

Friday was a very busy day for me because I was a speaker at an event. Plus, a buddy of mine, Mike Whalen from Florida, had talked me

into co-producing an event to raise money for MERF (Mensa Education and Research Fund). The event we decided on was a "Mr. Mensa Contest." My only condition was that I didn't want to be on stage at all, and it did happen to work out that way. We ended up recruiting eight contestants to compete in a sexy legs competition, talent competition, and a formal wear competition. It ended up being a lot of fun (and a lot of work) and we ended up raising \$1,255 for MERF, so it was well worth the effort.

All this fun continued as we listened to tidbits about the approaching hurricane. At one point, we heard that Dennis was category four or five and the hotel was reviewing its contingency plans for evacuation to Houston, Texas. How they were going to manage to evacuate 1,500 Mensans did leave me wondering, but I put my trust in the powers that be that all would end well. Luckily, at the last minute, Dennis decided to head north through Florida. I know that Florida has taken a beating from multiple hurricanes over the last couple years, but I couldn't help saying a small prayer every night, "head east, young man, head east."

Saturday I was unable to actually make it to any of the programs, but still had a great time. I finished the day off at our RVC, Alan Baltis's, Pretentious Drinking event (he usually hosts this at HalloWeem - Chicago Area's Regional Gathering in October). Then I headed over to a little dive where we had arranged to have a tiki party for my GenX sig. It turned out to be a blast with some great New Orleans food and a beach volleyball game with some Mensans who still had some energy.

At the same time Dennis made his way ashore in Pensacola, my friends and I were making our way out of New Orleans. As the wind picked up, we all said our goodbyes and headed to the airport. Most of us were able to make our flights home. However, a couple had a few choice opinions for the airlines that decide to cancel all their flights in and out of New Orleans. (I heard that some had a hurricane party to commiserate the event).

My flight home was actually much smoother than my flight to New Orleans. It was so much fun, that many of my friends and new friends are already reviewing which gatherings that they want to participate in. Next year's World Gathering in Orlando (in August) sounds absolutely huge. They are talking about twice the number as this year, with it being an international event celebrating the 60th anniversary of Mensa.

I know that some of my friends have already been signed up to speak on the travel program track that they are planning. The plan is to have people talk about places they are from or have visited all over the world. The word is if you plan to go, try to make your plans early because the hotel block will fill up really fast. Right now, I think I will settle for the next RG in my future - HalloWeem in the last weekend of October.

Melissa Rennie



Sherry McNamara presents Lydia Sanok with the first \$500.00 scholarship awarded by Northern Michigan Mensa

Treasurer's Report

Income and Spending.txt
 Income and Spending
 1/1/2005 through 6/30/2005

Category	Total
Income Categories	
friend fund	10.0000
NOA for corp subscrip	42.9000
NOA for new members	5.0000
NOA for regular members	387.2400
NOA for reinstated members	3.0000
NOA for second family members	1.0000
Savings acct int	0.1800
TBA checking int	16.7600
test fees	62.5000
Total Income Categories	528.5800
Expense Categories	
Newsletter postage	241.4500
Newsletter preparation	392.1400
scholarship expense	7.4100
testing exps	44.7000
Total Expense Categories	685.7000
Grand Total	-157.1200

Proof

Beginning Balance 1-1-05	\$3218.42
Income	528.58
	3747.00
Outgo	685.70
Ending balance 6-30-05	\$3061.30

Happy Thoughts

Stripes on my shirt, stars in the sky,
These are the things that catch my eye.
A purple rose, an apple tree,
The pretty things I like to see.

A lilac bush, a daffodil,
A hummingbird if I sit still.
A white rabbit, a butterfly,
A robin as it flies on by.

A grasshopper, a bright rainbow,
The first fluffy white flakes of snow.
A grassy field, a flowing brook,
I love to stop and take a look.

A clear blue sky, a bright full moon,
A wedding that takes place in June.
A chocolate bar, a juicy peach,
A picnic on a sandy beach.

A restful sleep, a tender kiss,
Now what could be better than this?
A new puppy, a turtle dove,
And best of all...your one true love.

Kelleen S. Bingham
5/17/96

Seasons

In Spring the flowers start anew
The animals have much to do.
At night the grass is wet with dew.
The world is bright and gay.

The Summer sun is warm and bright.
The crickets chirp all through the night.
The cool water's a welcome sight.
It's time for rest and play.

In Autumn leaves are on the ground.
Displays of colors all around,
And everywhere beauty is found
As colors change each day.

With Winter come the cold and snow.
Holiday cheer starts to show,
And children always want to know
How long till Christmas day.

The seasons change all through the year.
Each one brings its own special cheer,
And if you listen you can hear
What each one has to say.

Kelleen S. Bingham
1987