

# Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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 Borealis  
Northern Michigan Mensa

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**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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ON THE COVER: Pumpkins at a Farmer's Market, by Kelli Bingham

# Northern Michigan Mensa

## October 2005 Calendar

**BOOK CLUB** – Saturday, 1 October, 2005 at 12:30 p.m.

**NEW LOCATION!!** We will meet at the Cottage Café, 420 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, in the Papa's Den. The book for discussion this month is *Will in the World – How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*, by Stephen Greenblatt. 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.

**SECOND ANNUAL SOUTH MANITOU TRIP** – Saturday, 8 October at 9:15 a.m. Please call ahead to make a reservation with Manitou Island Transit at 256-9061. Meet at the dock at the end of Fishtown in Leland. Cost is \$25.00 for adults and \$14.00 for children. The group can either take a walking tour – led by Jill Daniels - or the motor tour. The cost of the motor tour is \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children. In either the walking or the motor tour, a history of the island will be provided. The ferry will leave promptly at 10:00 a.m., arriving at the island at 11:30 a.m. The group will eat in the picnic area when they arrive on the island, so bring a lunch and refreshments. The only food or drink available for purchase on the island is water. However, chips, pop, beer, and liquor are sold on the ferry. Please call Jill Daniels in addition to making your reservations with the Manitou Island Transit so she knows who is attending. Her phone number is 271-3997. Jill will be waiting at the dock by 9:00 that morning. Parking and shuttle to the meeting location for the ferry is free.

**TGIF** – Friday, 21 October 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.

**HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARTY, POTLUCK, AND GAMES NIGHT** – Saturday, 29 October, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. at Patty Paternel's house. She lives at 625 W. Ninth Street, Traverse City (3 houses East of Division). Her phone number is 231-633-2799 in case you need directions. Costumes are a must!! Please bring a dish to pass and BYOB. If you want to enter the "Pumpkin Carving Contest," bring a gutted pumpkin - winning entry receives a pie. Bring your favorite game to play. Plan to have a "booo---dacious" evening and "howling" good time!

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## From the Editor

Hello all. Let me start by informing you that there will be no more articles about Debbie Stabenow's meeting with a local women's group. It appears someone took offense to a political article being published in the newsletter. I did not think there would be a problem, as the writer did not include her personal opinion, but it appears I was mistaken. Therefore, in an effort to prevent any future ruffled feathers, I will no longer include any article pertaining to politics, religion, or any other subject I think is likely to cause controversy. If any of you are interested in the other articles, please email me and I will send them to you.

I sent a notice to everyone for whom I had an email address informing them of the newsletter email change. For those of you who don't yet know, the new address is [mmnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:mmnewsletter@hotmail.com). Please send any future correspondence to this address.

## Membership News

### Election Information

It's time to begin the process of determining who will become the five NMM members to perform the voting duties of the Executive Committee for Northern Michigan Mensa for the next two-year term to begin on January 1, 2006.

The first step has already been taken in selecting a three-person nominating committee. Margaret Scott, John Porter and Gary McWhirter were the first three members to volunteer. We three met with our Local Secretary, Sherry McNamara on August 31<sup>st</sup> and were informed we were accepted as the Nomination Committee.

Any Northern Michigan Mensa member interested in becoming a candidate for a voting position on the next Executive Committee should contact Margaret, John or Gary. They will nominate candidates in time for inclusion on the December ballot.

The five candidates receiving the most votes in the election will become the next voting members of the ExComm. Those five elected candidates will then decide amongst themselves who will serve in the three required officer positions of Local Secretary, Deputy Local Secretary and Treasurer. The remaining two will be At-Large Members. Because there are the three required positions, it would be very helpful for the nominating committee to know not only who would be willing to serve on the ExComm but at what preferred assignment.

Margaret, John and Gary may be contacted:

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

## I do Sudoku, do you?

In case you haven't discovered Sudoku puzzles, you might want to try them. Apparently they are quite the rage—now appearing in many newspapers, magazines and books.

Sudoku is a number placing game developed in Japan. (Note: this is not a game of mathematics; the numbers are merely convenient symbols and could be pictures of camels, gorillas, teddy bears, aardvarks, etc.) Each puzzle has only one solution, which can be reached logically.

I like them because they require you to be completely in present time to avoid making mistakes. Although there are Sudoku books available at bookstores, I print them off of a Web site and work on them as I find the time.

The supply is plentiful. Go to <http://play.websudoku.com/> They appear to have over 5 billion puzzles at each level: easy, medium, hard and evil. I worked the easy ones for quite some time, then moved on to the medium level (where I still am). I love them. Try them and see what you think.

–Ruth Minshull

## Happy Halloween!



# Summer – It was for the birds!

By Margaret J. Scott

It sounds like I didn't enjoy this summer, but I want to tell you just how much I did enjoy it. My favorite time of year is May-June when everything is new and green and things get lush all around. This summer was no disappointment. It was beautiful.

I live in the country with woods around my house. I have always enjoyed summertime and seeing birds nesting and animals around everywhere, but this year was something special. I may become a true "birder" some day. I saw things I have never seen before! For the first time in my life I saw Hermit Thrushes. I didn't know what they were at first as I saw them running on the ground and scavenging. We had heard their singing but never seen them before. I had to study the bird book at length, but once I saw their picture I was certain that's what they were. Also, this year the Great Crested Flycatcher was around singing. We had to consult a bird expert to identify that one. How exciting—birds I had never seen before.

In the past I have had an abundance of varieties of birds around attending my bird feeding stations. I have several placed around my deck, so I regularly see Goldfinches, a pair of Indigo Buntings, Rose Breasted Grosbeaks, Purple Finches, Sparrows, Blue Jays, Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds, Downy Woodpeckers, Pileated Woodpeckers and Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers, Eastern Phoebes, Nuthatches and Chickadees.

The sapsuckers lived in my tall tree and raised a baby bird there last year. They came back again this year for a repeat performance. It is such fun to see them train the young bird to find food. They fly to my suet feeder and get a beak full of suet and take it back to the tree, tucking it into the bark. Then they lure the baby to that place and show him how to pick under the bark and find the food. The baby begins to crawl up and down the tree looking for bugs and ants under the bark, and soon learns to fly to the suet feeder.

There was a pair of crows last year in the tall trees between my house and my grandson's house. I heard an awful lot of calling this summer and mentioned to my Grandson that it sounded like a lot more crows were around. Then, the wonderful happened—I looked out my sliding doors one day and saw birds fluttering around and falling out of the trees. After I did my double take, I realized I was watching three baby crows. This really made my day and I spent hours watching them. They couldn't fly much yet and they were sitting on poplar branches much too small for large birds; the branches would bend and the crows fell off and they fluttered and tried to get back on a branch. It only took them one day, though, and they learned to fly well enough to get up to the top of tall trees. I saw the spectacle of them learning to fly on only one day.

My biggest surprise was the day two pileated woodpeckers came to my suet feeder. I'd had one come on several occasions, but never two. One was much larger than the other one. The smaller one (the female) looked just identical to the big one but was a lot quicker and could hang onto the feeder better. The male was so big he had to jump on the feeder and bend himself under at his tail to even hang there. They flew to the feeder when I was sitting on my deck with the cat and they had to fly over our heads. So much for them being shy birds!

Since I don't know why the birds were around in such abundance this year, I can only guess. It was very hot for much of the summer. My yard is an oasis of green in the woods and looks like a golf course. My irrigation comes on every night so the grass is wet and dewy in the morning. The feeders are attractive and I have a large butterfly bush and some other attractive flowers on my deck. I guess all of the above are reasons the birds come.

One early morning this week my yard was filled with nearly a dozen Robins. They were apparently congregating to get ready to head south, because in a few hours they were gone. Now as I take in my hummingbird feeders and put them away until next year, I know I will miss the hummingbirds' territorial behavior. I look around at the browning ferns and turning leaves and I am sad to see my favorite season of the year pass.

But I love fall!

## RVC Column

Al-literations: Notes From Your RVC

By Alan Baltis of the Great Lakes/Ohio Valley Region 3

Hello everyone!

No more "Travelogue to New Orleans" this column- it strikes me as a little weird/insensitive to talk about how much fun we had in an area that's currently experiencing such woe. As is obvious from many conversations and e-mails with fellow Mensans, our hearts and best wishes are much with those suffering through the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

There are several efforts under way to help coordinate and maximize the impact of Mensans wishing to assist folks along the Gulf Coast. The National Office has set up an email list to serve as a clearing-house for members offering and seeking info on how area Mensans are doing. Dollar donations are being collected and forwarded to charitable organizations that seem to spend the most dollars on actual aid rather than administrative overhead. Project Inkslinger, first birthed (thanks, TJ!) to help restock libraries that had been devastated by flooding along the Mississippi River, is gearing up to offer similar services to Katrina-swamped facilities. For more details, please hie out to our national website [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org) and follow the appropriate links. Here's a chance to show that our hearts are as big as our brains!

Let's switch gears- there's some cool Mensa stuff to talk about this month!

October is an important month for Mensa, especially Saturday, October 22, which is National Testing Day. Many local groups offer testing throughout the year, often monthly or even more frequently. Eight years ago, however, someone at the national level came up with the idea that by simultaneously hosting testing sessions all across the nation, we could build public awareness and excitement about being in This Smart Thing Of Ours, and use that focus to get additional publicity- as well as, of course, more members!

So that's what happens on National Testing Day. All across the country, multiple testing sessions (at last count more than 100) take place throughout the day, often accompanied by refreshments, celebratory decorations, and the like. For instance, in my local group our mighty Proctor Coordinator Vikki Broida has arranged at least 3 sessions across the city, and ECOM's (East Central Ohio Mensa, our just-south-of-us sibling group) PC, Joan Currington, has also arranged at least 3 sessions. There's a total of 14 different sessions in 10 of our 16 local groups, and still more will be added between now and 10/14. Some groups have had to move their sessions to Sunday or another weekend, but they're still in the spirit of the thing.

If you have a friend that you've always thought was Mensa material, but haven't been able to convince them to dig out old SAT scores or sit for a test, now's a perfect opportunity. There's all kinds of additional data on the (you guessed it) national website, [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org), including fee info, a by-state testing location finder, how to get an at-home sample test so that people can "practice" before the big day, etc. Please do whatever you can to help out at these sessions, and to enthruse friends to attend and take the test. Your friends will thank you for turning them onto this wonderful thing you've discovered!

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Another thing that makes Mensa great is our Regional Gatherings. I myself am an RG junkie, having been to more than 100 since "decloaking" and becoming quite active in the early 90s. I've always had a sense of there being an appropriate ratio for "how many hours driven/how many hours of fun had," but what I discovered was that, as I liked RGs more and more, the ratio shifted kept shifting and my definition of "reasonable distance" went all to hell.

What makes October particularly great for Region 3 Mensans is the RG hosted by Chicago Area Mensa, taking place just next door in Region 4. Held over a long weekend usually including Halloween (this year 10/27-30), it epitomizes what makes for a great RG: copious hospitality (love that Chicago-style pizza), tons of fascinating programs on every topic under the moon, a huge and well-stocked games room, comfy sofas and tables and such which make for 1001 great Mensa conversations. And of course there's the Costume Parade, whereby hundreds of M's dress up as "visual puns" and compete for the biggest groan of the night. I've seen classics like "Self-Cleaning Coven," "Monroe Doctorin'," and

“Hootie and the Blowfish.” Bop out to the Chicago Area Mensa website. Here tons of photos of past costumes are posted- you’ll get the idea!

I’m a little biased, given that I lived in Chicago for almost 40 years and have attended more than a dozen HalloweeMs. But if you’ve been looking for a way to expand your Mensa horizons from just your local “Dining with De” and these “RG” things have sounded interesting, believe me, you can’t do much better than HalloweeM. It’s so good it’s worth driving a few hundred miles, even in this troubled time of \$3/gallon gas prices. Hey, maybe they’ll even have a session with an economist that explains how THAT happened (beyond the unchecked greed of our far-from-public-spirited oil companies, he said with chagrined frustration). Hope to see you there!

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P.S. How’s this for a working motto for the Great Lakes/Ohio Valley Region? “So Superior, It’s Erie.” Email me at [RVC3@us.mensa.org](mailto:RVC3@us.mensa.org) with other suggestions if you’ve got ‘em!

## Praying Mantis



From Melissa Rennie

## Tree Frog



Tree frogs are amphibians. Their life cycle starts with an unshelled egg laid in water which hatches into a fishlike larva. This becomes a tadpole, sprouting legs and lungs as an adult.

Frogs are thin skinned. They absorb water and air through this skin and so prefer moist areas. They eat insects so he is a welcome and useful roomer at my condo. Fortunately they do not eat cats of which I have 2 and would like to keep.

In winter frogs enter a dormant, sleeplike state. They burrow in mud or the bottom of ponds to keep from freezing.

My frog was discovered because of his raucus call. He sounds almost like a bluejay. I understand this is to attract females so my frog must be a male. From pictures in Google he seems to be a gray tree frog.

Ellen Monahan



# Pumpkin Cookies

Makes 36

## Ingredients:

2 cups flour  
1 cup quick or old-fashioned oats, uncooked  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup butter or margarine, softened  
1 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup canned or fresh pumpkin  
1 cup chopped pecans

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine flour, oats, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; set aside. Cream butter gradually; add sugar, beating until fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla; mix well. Gradually add pumpkin and dry ingredients. Drop about one tablespoon of dough per cookie. Bake about 15 minutes or until light brown.



# Pumpkin Pie

## Ingredients:

1 (9 inch) unbaked deep dish pie crust  
3/4 cup white sugar  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
2 eggs  
1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin  
1 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 F.  
Combine sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger and cloves in small bowl. Beat eggs lightly in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture. Gradually stir in evaporated milk. Pour into pie shell.  
Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 F.; bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve immediately or refrigerate. (Do not freeze as this will cause the crust to separate from the filling.)

