

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



 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". 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: February Hike on Sabin Pond by Jack Schultz

Northern Michigan Mensa

March 2006 Calendar

MOVIE CLUB - Saturday, 4 March 2006 at 2:00 p.m.

We will meet at Flap Jack Shack located at 3980 N. US 31 S for the discussion portion of our meeting. On Friday, 24 February, I will post the movie title on the webpage and will send out an email notification of the movie we will be viewing at Horizon Cinemas, 3587 Market Place Circle, Traverse City. You will have to attend the movie anytime beginning Friday, 24 February and running through Thursday, 2 March (Movies change following the last showing on Thursday night, so don't wait until Friday the 6th as it may not be the same movie that we will be discussing.) Remember to check the NMM Events webpage on Friday, 24 February for the title at <http://nmm.us.mensa.org/>. For those members who do not have a computer, you can call me (Sherry) on the 24th and I will be happy to provide you the movie title. My phone number is 933-9272.

BRUNCH - Saturday, 11 March 2006, at 11:00 a.m.

We will meet at Cottage Café, located at 420 Munson Avenue, Traverse City. We will hold our gathering in the Papa's Den, which is on the right as you enter the front door.

MYSTERY PUZZLE NIGHT (AND HOUSE WARMING??) - Saturday, 18 March 2006, at 7:00 p.m.

Ellen Monahan will host this at her NEW home, 1222 Willow Street, Traverse City. Come be part of a mystery puzzle to solve and to socialize. **IMPORTANT NOTE: Call Ellen at 929-9281 to get your FIRST personal piece of the puzzle**, to RSVP, and get directions to her house. Spouses and significant others are welcome. Please bring what you would like to drink and a SMALL snack. Ellen will have paper cups and plates and will serve decaf and milk and cookies before you leave.

EXCOMM MEETING FOR VOTING (ELECTED) AND NON-VOTING (APPOINTED) MEMBERS - Friday, 24 March 2006 at 6:00 p.m.

It is STRONGLY encouraged that all ExComm members attend this important meeting. The topic of discussion will be the future of Northern

Michigan Mensa. This will be held at Sherry McNamara's home, 1526 W. Silver Lake Road N, Traverse City. (Call for directions 933-9272.) **Please bring a snack or hors d'oeuvres to share and whatever you want to drink, pop will be provided.**

TGIF - Friday, 24 March 2006, 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 (New) Editor

Hi fellow Mensans, this will be my first issue as your new Borealis editor. I want to start off by thanking Kelli Bingham for all her great efforts as previous editor. I'm starting to appreciate all the time and energy she put in to get out an issue every month. I think she has done a superb job and I hope I can do as well.

For those of you who don't know me, I joined Mensa about three years ago after taking the test partly to see if I could do it and partly to find a new circle of friends after my wife and I retired and moved to Traverse City. My only regret is not having joined Mensa many years ago.

My background is in engineering and computer programming and in addition to designing and writing programs, I often wrote and edited the accompanying documentation and user manuals (my qualifications for being Borealis editor).

I think we have an interesting publication going here, but it is only as good as what you write and send in. So keep those articles and suggestions coming! The address for electronic submissions will remain the same as before: nmmnewsletter@hotmail.com.

Send regular mail to: Borealis
Stan Cain
3584 Village Circle Drive
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AI-literations

By Alan Baltis, your Great Lakes/Ohio Valley Region 3 Vice-Chairunit

Over the holidays I had a chance to catch up with my kid brother, and by “kid” I mean younger, as in 42 to my 46, but he’ll always be “the kid” despite having turned into a fine man some years ago. He’s in the National Guard, served in the Iraq War a few years ago, but is now back on native soil. In recent conversation with his fellow officers it was mentioned that James Doohan had died, and a number of his fellow officers said “who...?” He chimed in with “you know, Scotty from Star Trek.” And one of his fellows came across with “of course *you’d* know that” in a far-less-than-complimentary manner.

Younger brother Bruce was decent, laughed it off, and the conversation veered off onto another topic. But of course between us brothers we chatted ruefully about all the things he should have said, like “funny- I can’t think of anything that I’m certain *you’d* know,” or, “yes, I read the credits as well as look at the pretty pictures.” But the fact that his compatriot felt free to insult someone for being too smart, for knowing too much, grrr- it got in my craw the way it has all my life.

A second anecdote. I was once having one of those deep/silly late-night talks with friends, and the subject came up that there seem to be saints for just about everything, from the major (St. Christopher for travelers) to the minor (St. Barbara for bomb technicians, or St. Scholls for comfortable footwear) (okay, I might be making that last one up). The question was asked, if you were going to be a Saint, what would you be the Saint of? Those of you who know me as the rational heathen that I am are, already chuckling, but let me proceed (and finally get to the point of this column).

I would be the Saint of Appropriate Pride.

I love being smart. I love being able to think a little faster, and understand things a little more deeply, and being able to compare and contrast things a few degrees more concisely. I love being able to remember all the trivia and *significa* that I do. I love being able to get *almost* all of Dennis Miller’s references, to be able to learn about just about anything that interests me, and to be able to share what I know deeply and enthusiastically with others. I love being able to make a pun or crack a joke or throw out an obscure movie quote a little faster than your standard-issue human. I love trying (and sometimes being able) to understand what motivates or haunts others. I love knowing a lot of music, and being able to pick out patterns and surprises and “get” how mathematical and yet delightfully mysterious it all is. I love knowing a lot of words, and being able to pick just the right ones to

express what I’m thinking (including vulgarities, for all you bluenoses) (Nova Scotians excepted). And I love breaking rules and playing with language, like making up words like “*significa*” and have them make an odd, wonderful kind of sense to me. If there’s truth to Gardner’s assertion that there are 7 kinds of intelligence, I think I may be pretty well equipped with 5 or even 6 of them (all but bodily/kinesthetic- no cartwheels for AI). I am blessed with all these different ways that I get to exercise my wacky, many-fissured brain. And, yes, I’m proud of that. And I hope that all of you that match me and exceed me in different ways are justly proud, too.

However.

I do know that being smart does not necessarily pave the way for a happy life. Rather than being content with the simple/trite solutions to Life’s Big Issues, I acknowledge that some things are hard to understand, and that it’s hard to know what to do in an increasingly complex, messy, urgent world. I, in an odd way, envy the folks who have found easy solutions to religious or political or social issues, because it must be pretty satisfying to find contentment in being certain, in thinking that you really *know* something profoundly and unshakably. Instead I too often see too many facets, too many big diamonds, and am continually aware that how much I know just illustrates how much I *don’t* know. But that’s okay- I can use some humility to go with all this capability, y’know?

And I know that the rest of the world (let’s say, oh, roughly 98%) doesn’t always appreciate these gifts. Being able to remember a phone number after one use, or figure a dinner tip out near-instantly, or being able to use all 7 tiles in Scrabble, or solve Rubik’s Cube- that’s not often celebrated, and in some cases is viewed as something kind of mysterious and show-offy and vaguely...bad. A little bit like witchcraft, maybe; invisible and a little threatening depending on how it’s used.

Maybe it’s the mystery of it, the fact that there are no visible moving parts. When someone is good at sports, or playing music, or carpentry, it’s obvious or at least understandable how it’s done. People watching Olympic athletes see that they’re world-class at what they do, but it’s not beyond a viewer’s imagining that with some natural gifts and a whole lot of practice and discipline, they could be a champion sprinter or ski jumper or fencer, too. But having a facility with languages or being calculator-quick with math doesn’t often happen with an observable amount of blood and toil, tears and sweat, and is therefore a little suspect.

Despite that, and for a long time now, I’ve been done with damping myself down so as not to offend others. I don’t necessarily use my smarts to show off, I don’t race to an answer so that I can be the guy with his hand up

in class. But I also don't hide it if I know something, or stop myself from using a good word if it would be perfect for what I'm trying to say. I make it as fun and cool as possible to be smart, so that people see the upside of being bright. When I know some impossible fact in Trivia Pursuit and someone asks, "how do you know that?" I say "I'm not sure- but isn't it cool that I do?" If I solve one of Kadon's puzzles spooky-fast, I no longer apologize, I just say, "well, I have a facility for this kind of stuff- maybe one day it'll come in handy!" And I must admit that if someone actively makes fun of my being smart, it's amusing to be able to quote from a P.J. Mueller cartoon "You lack analytical rigor. And so does your mother."

I find that humor is good, and a little self-deprecation along with the smart stuff, and a lot of emotional intelligence along with my mighty pattern-finding brain. I can't find an attribution for it, but I often think of a quote along the lines of "People may not remember exactly what you said, but they'll always remember how you made them feel." I hope you all soon get the opportunity to celebrate your brightness without using it as a weapon, nor making excuses for it. The world would be a better place if we all took appropriate pride in who and what we are.

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This is my last column as your Region 3 RVC. Thanks to everyone who called/wrote/emailed/talked to me at Gatherings for your many good ideas and insightful comments. Though I have ended my association with the AMC, I will continue to contribute to Mensa in many other ways, as I hope all of you will, too. Onwards!

NMM – Connect

By Melissa J. Rennie

After much discussion, there is a new service available for Northern Michigan Mensa - a yahoo group named NMM - Connect. Yahoo is perhaps not the "best avenue" but it most likely is the simplest avenue to engage the largest number of members. It is quite simply, a new benefit for members of NMM. It is not designed to replace our monthly events, newsletter, etc., but to enhance them. For example, to continue a conversation from brunch or for those that want to participate in the book club but are unable to make the

face-to-face meeting, a way to take part in the discussion with those that attended.

Also, it will allow for in-depth discussion on any subject under the sun. No topic is off-limits. Just keep in mind that the yahoo group will be open to all members – from the youngest to the oldest. The yahoo group will also be open to parents of members under the age of 18, so they have access to the subjects discussed. This list may also be open to "friends," – fellow Mensans from other groups whom the ExCom determines have an interest in the happenings of NMM.

Again, this is not to replace the face-to-face contact that many members enjoy, but to add another dimension to NMM. Some members will chose not to participate for a variety of reasons, but it will allow those that have access to a computer and a little time for exchange a wonderful outlet. I will be the owner of the group, and to subscribe, send an email to me, or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NMM-Connect> with your name and membership number. You do need your name and membership number to subscribe, but if you wish to be somewhat anonymous, feel free create a username through yahoo or if you are interested in a gmail account, send me an email, and I will send you an invite. There are three ways to access messages through yahoo groups: direct emails to your inbox, a digest after so many emails or to read directly from the website.

Since I have been on a few Mensa Yahoo groups since I became a Mensan, I will state upfront, this is a benefit for members of NMM, not a requirement. If it is determined by the ExCom that a member is using the list to harass, abuse or attack other members, that member will be removed from the list.

One thing that I have learned in my travels in Mensa, is if you have a room with 100 Mensans, there tend to be about 150 opinions in the room. That is the exchange that we are looking for. We are opening up another dimension to exchange ideas, which is the basis of Mensa's philosophy. There are ways to have discussions on the most polarizing of issues without resorting to name-calling and "flame-wars."

As always, I think it goes without saying that the opinions stated on the list belong to those that state them, not American Mensa.

One of the benefits I have found in belonging to a variety of Mensan yahoo groups is if you ask a question - on any subject - you will usually receive an answer quickly.

Teams Needed for Culture Quest XVII

By Sherry McNamara

This is the LAST call for members to sign-up to play Culture Quest (CQ) XVII. The game will be held on Sunday, 30 April at 4:00 p.m. The deadline to let me know you want to play is 15 March 2006; I must submit the registration form by the end of March.

CQ is played by teams comprised of up to five players, with one member being the captain. We can enter multiple teams in the contest. The cost is \$40 per team, so the cost per person will be dependent on the number of players per team (\$8 for 5-member team; \$10 for 4 member team, etc.).

The game is played by members of American Mensa as well as Canada Mensa simultaneously. It is like playing a long trivia game of cultural knowledge. Questions can be about current events, science, politics, entertainment, etc. The game lasts for 90 minutes and the start time is dependent on the time zone in which the participant resides. Following the game we will go to a local restaurant for dinner.

Contact me via email at kikiwon@hotmail.com and please put CQ2006 in the subject line or you can call me at 933-9272 to confirm you would like to play.

New Officers

By Sherry McNamara

On Saturday, 18 February, the elected ExComm appointed the following officers:

Stan Cain -	Newsletter Editor
Carol Crawford -	Program Chair
Judith Lindenau -	Publicity Chair
Jim McDermott -	Membership Chair
Melissa Rennie -	S.I.G.H.T Coordinator
John Schultz, PhD -	Proctor Coordinator
Stephen Siciliano -	Webmaster
Pete Turkus -	Ombudsman
Dorothy Vogel -	Scholarship Chair

As you can see, some of these were reappointed officers, but we have several new ones as well. I would like to thank all of them for their commitment to Northern Michigan Mensa. While it can certainly be a fun and enjoyable experience working in these capacities, it is also a devotion of time and responsibility by the member. Sometimes we take for granted that NMM functions and moves forward rather effortlessly and we forget that it is due to a great volunteer effort by some of its members. Next time you see one of these officers, please thank them for their dedication to NMM.

FORMULA PUZZLE

Submitted by Margaret J. Scott

See if you can solve the formulas in this puzzle. The formulas represent well-known expressions.

Sample: N. N. = G. N. Answer: No News = Good News

1. M. + M. + N. H. + V. + C. + R. I. = N. E.
2. " 1 B. in the H. = 2 B. in the B. "
3. 8 D. - 24 H. = 1 W.
4. 4 J. + 4 Q. + 4 K. = all the F.C.
5. A. + N. + A. F. + M.C. + C. G. = A. F.
6. 23 Y. - 3 Y. = 2 D.
7. C. + 6 D. = N. Y. E.
8. B. or G. - F. - M. = O.
9. N. + V. + P. + A. ± A. + C. + P. + I. = P. of S.
10. P. + N. + D. + Q. + H. D. are all C.
11. S. + H. of R. = U. S. C.
12. Y. - S. - S. - A. = W.
13. T. = L. S. State
14. A. & E. were in the G. of E.
15. My F. L. & South P. are both M.C.

(Puzzle answers will appear in next month's issue)