



# Borealis

NORTHERN MICHIGAN MENSA

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2

OCTOBER 2004



**Michigan Legacy Art Park**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OCTOBER

**Michigan Legacy Art Park and Picnic Lunch**—Saturday, 9 October, at 11:00 a.m. We will stroll through the Michigan Legacy Art Park at the Crystal Mountain resort (there is no charge to hike the park, but there is a “conscience box”). Come to enjoy the art work in the woods and the onset of beautiful fall colors. Be advised that the trail is about 1.5 miles (2.5 kilometres) in length and there are some steep climbs in a few sections. Bring a sack lunch for a picnic along the trail. See Melissa’s article in this issue for more info and a link to the website. Now, how to get to Crystal Mountain:

**FROM Traverse City**—The basic plan is US31 west. About 8 miles west of the traffic light at Interlochen, turn left (south) on County 669 (Thompsonville Road)—key to the corner is the fish hatchery on the right and Danny’s Bar on the left. At the second stop sign (about 10 miles), turn right (you’re now in T’ville) and continue westbound onto Lindy Road right to the entrance. Come to a stop sign, turn left. The next stop sign is at the corner of the Kinlochen Lodge. Take a hard right following the arrow on the one and only sign. Follow to the next stop sign and take another right. The entrance to the trail is about ¼ mile on the left. The small parking lot is located at the base of the trail.

**FROM Cadillac**—Just cruise on up M115 to the main resort entrance, follow the directions above.

**FROM Manistee or the south**—Basic plan is take US31 north to the Benzie-Manistee county line, turn right (east) on County Line Road (County 602). Go about eight miles to Wenonah and turn left.

This is the back side of the resort, and is a little difficult to see. Drive forward to the stop sign at the Kinlochen Lodge, and follow the directions above.

**Mensa National Testing Day**—16 October, 2004. Testing will be held on the Northwestern Michigan College campus. Please encourage folks you know to take the test. For complete information, please call Jack Schultz at 231-275-6735.

**TGIF**—Friday, 22 October at 6:00 P.M. We meet in the Shine Café located in the lower level of Horizon Books, 243 E. Front St. in Traverse City. Wrap sandwiches, soft drinks, coffee, and desserts are available for purchase. Always a good social time with lots of stimulating conversations!

# MICHIGAN LEGACY ART PARK

*Melissa Rennie*

Buried in a nearby forest is a northern Michigan gem that combines northern Michigan history, art, and the great outdoors. Just over the Manistee County line, nestled between golf courses at Crystal Mountain lies the Michigan Legacy Art Park.

The art park features world-renowned artists and some artists that are just beginning their journey. The park currently features roughly thirty-five pieces of art scattered along a winding trail. One can only estimate the pieces, because the park is a work in progress.

The pieces range from the whimsical Frog to the subtle Serpent Mounds. The pieces struggle to engage all of an individual's senses from complex visual images to subtle engagement of individual memories from Michigan history.

The art is a statement of Michigan history beginning with Michigan mound builders to American Indian artist Lois Beardslee's traditional Ojibwa birch-bark cutouts to commentary on logging, mining, hunting, farming, and the great outdoors.

The Michigan woods serve as a backdrop, with natural lighting filtering through the overhead branches, a constant background of nature calls, and the ever-changing ambient temperature of northern Michigan.

As one makes their way along the trail, that fittingly resembles an old logging road, one also winds their way through Michigan's past. Some of the pieces are so subtle that you actually have to seek them out before you're almost bowled over by their obvious placement which tends to conceal them into the background.

Others are so visually stunning that you stand in awe at their creation. But the crowning jewel lies at the end of Stockade Trail on Hawk's Ridge - the Stockade Labyrinth by David Barr. The Labyrinth is every child's (and adult's) dream fort, a simple maze that leads to a secret room at the top. Along the way are tributes to French explorers and subtle hints of Michigan's past, that each pass through will bring new features to light.

An added perk to the trail is strategically placed poetry rocks to keep ones interest between artwork. The greatest literary tribute is to one of Northern Michigan's own—Ernest Hemingway. David Barr's tribute to Hemingway's hundredth birthday seems fitting as the Big Two Hearted River winds its way off the path.

And as one returns to the parking lot, it is only fitting to quote one of Hemingway's favorite characters, Nick Adams, "He's all right, Nick thought. He was only tired."

The Michigan Legacy Art Park is open year around and is located off Mountain Side Drive at Crystal Mountain. During the summer months, the park offers concerts on Friday evenings. For more information, [www.michlegacyartpark.org](http://www.michlegacyartpark.org).

(This article was originally published in the *Manistee News-Advocate*; the cover photo was also submitted by Melissa. Our thanks - ed.)

I'd rather be a "could-be"  
If I can not be an "are,"  
Because a "could-be" is a "maybe"  
Who is reaching for a star.

I'd rather be a "has-been"  
Than a "might-have-been," by far,  
For a "might-have-been" has never been  
But a "has" was once an "are."

Milton Berle

**\*\*\*Editors' Note:**

*Given the unexpected number of hours it took us to rekey and reformat the submissions for this edition, we humbly BEG that in the future all pieces be submitted as Word documents attached to emails. Thank you in advance for your help!*

## **THE MANGO SHIRT**

*Hal ('Jale) Kranick*

"Mire, `Jale, llegemos a los mangos!" said Alcides. Sure enough, I could see the beginning of the foothills and they had a green blanket of trees. Trees of all kinds and sizes to be found in the tropics but especially mango trees. The air was rich with the sweet aroma of the juicy ripe fruit. The prospect of traveling under a cool green canopy offering an all-you-can-eat menu of mangos was a welcomed relief on the journey. Nearly four hours earlier Alcides and I had saddled up our mules in front of my house in Padre Las Casas. We were going to La Tina. For a month now I had been looking forward to this trip despite the long mule ride up the mountain path.

Following the Rio Piedras, which true to its name has as many rocks as water in some parts, we would arrive in nine or ten hours at the hot spring called La Tina. The village turned out to see me, a Peace Corps volunteer, leave. Many of them no doubt willing only to bet on the mules making it back to town. Others, assuming that as a secret CIA/FBI/KGB spy, thought I would be picked up by a black helicopter and flown to Washington in order to brief the President on the current state of the coffee crop. I mean why else would a gringo come to live in Padre Las Casas and what else is more important than the coffee crop. Even camposinos in the Dominican Republic knew that Norte Americanos won't work without coffee to drink in the morning. Why, next to oil, coffee is the most important liquid for the American economy.

Breaking out of my James Bond thoughts of being seen as a secret spy I realized

that we had now traveled well into the forest. Mangos were everywhere! They were on the trees, on the ground and always one in each of Alcides hands. It is true that people eat well during the fruit season. Even the poor who never get enough food can gorge themselves at this time. "Alcides, te vas a enfermar si comes tanto," I said as I saw him dripping with mango juice and wondering how sick he would be by tomorrow.

Alcides adopted me soon after I arrived in the village. He lived in a one-room mud/ stick bohio with nine brothers and sisters and his domineering mother, Dora. His two oldest sisters, like Dora, earned just enough to keep everyone alive, if not healthy, by selling favors to the local men. As poor as Alcides was, I quickly learned that he was completely honest and trustworthy. May God grant that I never know how hard it is to be half starving and look at but not touch nor ask for a piece of food sitting in front of me. I might not pass that test but Alcides, a 16-year-old did, and so I came to depend upon him to guide me in the village affairs. He got to sleep in my house, which had two rooms and a cement floor making it the village Hilton. Alcides had no shirt and one pair of shorts when I arrived. I gave him a tee shirt, which said something in English. The Shirt thereby conferred a status he had never known among the other kids. None of them really knew what the words meant but it was from America. Glancing over at Alcides I could now see that after wearing it day in and day out for three months and after being washed by being beating on river rocks The Shirt was almost threadbare. It was also soon so covered with mango juice that it glistened in the sunshine.

It is so easy to daydream when plodding along on a mule. The hours went by broken only by reaching up to grab a mango or looking down as we cross the Rio Piedras again. That was one thing about the trip. The trail crossed the river eleven times between Padre Las Casas and La Tina. Mules like to get in the middle of the steam, take a drink and then take a dump in the water. It's also why everyone who lives there has waterborne illnesses. I came to think I was sick if I didn't have diarrhea at least once a week. So here I was in the middle of the stream for the seventh or eighth time waiting for my mule, Relampago (Lighting), to contaminate the river, when it hit me. "Alcides, donde esta la llave de mi casa?" I shouted. I had just bought a lock for my door and put it on for the first time that morning. Having no pockets in my tee shirt or shorts I gave the key to Alcides. "No preocupe" replied Alcides after swallowing a big chunk of mango and then wiping his hands all over his shirt. He reached in the tee shirt pocket and pulled it out for me to see. I could also see that his shirt was now wet with mango juice and several hours of mango-eating opportunities remained.

Around dusk we finally did arrive at La Tina. On the ledge overlooking the cool waters of Rio Piedras was a natural pool the depth of a hot tub but an area the size of a room. Here the water comes bubbling out of the rocks. It is actually effervescent as well as being a perfectly warm temperature. The Tina would flow over some rocks and fall down into the river while new warm water would flow into pool. We tied the mules up and stripped off our clothes leaving them on the ground

and jumped into La Tina. Aches, pains, and soreness disappeared to be replaced by the most restful sleep imagined. That's where we spent the night.

Daybreak came and we prepared to return to the village. I dressed and got Relampago ready when I saw Alcides looking around without The Shirt on. "Jale, se desaparecio la camisa."

"Well your shirt can't walk so it is somewhere," I replied. But somewhere it was not and that meant either something in the night dragged it off or one of the mules ate it. And why not? That shirt had the equivalent of about forty bottles of mango juice on it. It would be a tasty and tempting treat and whatever ate it must have thought it had found the biggest mango in the world. Finally we gave up looking and Alcides realized that he had lost The Shirt and his status with the other kids in the village.

Shortly, thereafter we came to the first crossing of the river where the mules stopped so that they could do their thing. That's when I remembered that MY KEY was in the shirt pocket and if one of the mules ate it during the night then what was coming out of the rear end of the mules could include, among the rest, MY KEY. Jumping off Relampago I grabbed a stick and beat at the floating pieces of mule poop. MY KEY! It could be in any one of the Twinkie-shaped floaters. Yelling at Alcides, I told him about the poop/key relationship and had him help break the Twinkies before they floated away. We had no luck that time but true to form the mules gave us ten more chances as we went through the ritual dump at each of the remaining river crossings on the road back.

My key was never found but we did learn about the variety and color of the foodstuffs mules like to eat. I returned to La Tina many other times and had equally interesting trips even without the thrill of stool examinations. The lock was never replaced and my house remained unlocked the three years I was in the village without ever losing a thing. Oh yes, Alcides got a new shirt out the trip—with English words on it, thereby keeping his status in town. As for mangos, I still love them, but have always made sure not to wipe the juice on my shirt.

# Dark Secret

*Kelleen S. Bingham*

I'm sure you won't believe me when  
I tell you what I know  
About something that happened to  
Me very long ago.

I was quite young and so it is  
Hazy even to me.  
You'll doubt at first, but just listen  
And you will surely see.

For I have proof that what I say  
Is purely the truth.  
I have a claw, a bit of hair,  
And yes, even a tooth.

I swear sincerely on my soul  
That this is not a lie,  
For I recall with true horror  
That I made someone die.

Not me, you say? I couldn't  
Possibly do such a thing?  
Well, I am sure you'll change your mind,  
If you keep listening.

You see, it all began one day  
When I was about ten.  
My life had been perfectly normal  
Right up until then.

I was playing out in the woods  
When dusk began to fall.  
I started walking home for I  
Knew soon Mother would call.

There was a full moon in the sky  
To help me find my way,  
And all was peaceful and calm in  
The waning autumn day.

Then suddenly I heard a noise  
And as I turned to see,

I stared in shock at the creature  
That stood in front of me.

At first I thought it was a man,  
For he stood quite upright.  
But his face looked more like a dog  
In the glowing moonlight.

What happened next? Well, you see friend,  
I really couldn't say  
For I was so very frightened  
I fainted dead away.

When I awoke my mother's voice  
Was calling frantically,  
And I was lying on the ground  
Beneath a maple tree.

I rushed back home where Mother  
Proceeded to question me.  
But I didn't know what to say.  
What did I really see?

And there was a mark on my neck  
Hidden under the hair.  
It looked somewhat like a dog bite.  
Now how did that get there?

I tried to make myself forget.  
I said it was a dream.  
But now and then, from fitful sleep,  
I would wake up and scream.

Then one month later the next full  
Moon began to appear.  
And still, just thinking back on it  
Will fill my heart with fear.

As the moon rose into the sky  
My form began to change.  
The face I saw in the mirror  
Was distorted and strange.

As the transformation took place  
I felt a growing need,



A burning thirst that could only  
Be quenched by evil deed.

So I slipped out into the night  
To search for human prey.  
My hunger drove me on until  
I found someone to slay.

My victim was a robust man  
Who was out chopping wood.  
I crept quietly through shadows  
Till I reached where he stood.

With glowing eyes and small, sharp teeth  
I pounced upon his back.  
But he grabbed me and threw me down  
Upon a kindling stack.

I jumped back up and dove for him  
But he was strong and quick.  
And as I tried to bite his arm  
He hit me with a stick.

He knocked a tooth out of my mouth,  
But that didn't stop me.  
I kept fighting with a fierceness  
I hope you'll never see.

He grabbed an ax and swung as I  
Tried to claw out his eyes.  
As the end of my toe came off,  
The night filled with my cries.

But I kept fighting with the man,  
Driven by blind fury.  
And though his power was great,  
The stronger creature was me.

I tore open his throat and drank  
His blood so thick and hot.  
When I was done, I left his lying  
There in that same spot.

Exhausted, I lay down to sleep  
Right next to my victim.

When I opened my eyes, the first  
Thing that I saw was him.

In shock, I looked at what I'd done:  
The blood spread all around,  
And the man with his throat torn out  
Lying upon the ground.

The horror filled my soul as I  
Realized that it was true.  
I'd killed a man, and I just didn't  
Know what I should do.

I was just a child of ten  
With just one place to go.  
I went back home and told Mother  
I had something to show.

I took her to the man and I  
Explained it all to her.  
She didn't believe me at first,  
But next month she'd be sure.

The next month I convinced her to  
Chain me up to my bed.  
She promised not to set me free  
No matter what I said.

She watched the change in shocked silence  
And there she made a vow.  
She'd keep me from killing again.  
She'd find a way somehow.

So, once a month I go back home  
Where Mother waits with chains  
To keep the terrible horror  
From happening again.

Now do you believe my story?  
Do you know it's the truth?  
For look here and I will show you  
That I'm missing a tooth.

And do you see my index finger  
Is missing at the end?

I swear to you all I have said  
Is not a lie, my friend.

I know you are wondering why  
I've told you this story.  
Well, I was hoping that you would  
Do a favor for me.

Unfortunately Mother was  
Sick and died just last week.  
And since you are my friend, I thought  
It's your help I should seek.

For tonight the moon will be full  
And I will change again.  
And I need someone with me who  
Is good with locks and chains.

## **THOUGHTS OF THE LocSec**

*Sherry McNamara*

Each month American Mensa picks a "Top 10 List." This list is sent to all LocSecs and several other members of the ExComm. I thought it might be on the Website too, but if it was there, I couldn't find it.

Anyway, Northern Michigan Mensa was recognized! We made the top 10 in "Percentage of New Members within Groups 4/1-8/31." We were second on the list, following Rochester Area Mensa, who had a 10.6% increase in membership. Northern Michigan Mensa had a 10.53% increase. Way to go NMM!!!

Not that I'm competitive in any way, but Mid-Michigan Mensa only had a 9.83% increase. I know, I know, I know, those math people out there will tell me that, numerically, Mid-Michigan had MORE new members than we did because they have a larger group to begin with, so in that respect they did better. BUT I still say, WAY TO GO NMM!!!

# THE ILLITERATI

Ruth Minshull

I've owned and operated computers for about twenty-six years now. A friend and I bought a Radio Shack unit together in 1978. This was well before Windows existed. There was no mouse. We simply used the old DOS system.

At first I had difficulty accepting the literalness of the computer. I would try something that seemed quite logical, and get hopelessly snarled up because the computer just didn't "get it." When I would complain to my friend, he'd laugh and remind me that I wouldn't get anywhere by saying "You know what I mean" to a computer.

He explained, "It can store an incredible amount of data; it can retrieve information with unbelievable speed; it can make lightening-quick calculations. But it won't catch a subtle nuance, recognize an innuendo, pick up on a double entendre or laugh at your jokes." I almost gave up right there when I found that it would never laugh at my jokes.

He then summed up the whole concept by saying, "Basically, the computer is an idiot savant." That clarified the matter for me. I won't say I never had trouble with the thing again, but I did stop expecting it to understand me.

I'm sure the phrase "idiot savant" is no longer politically correct; it's been sanitized, and is now simply "savant". But I hope we can still use it to describe an inanimate object. I call my machine an "idiot" or bad-mouth it in some other way several times a day. So far, I haven't been dragged off in handcuffs by the PC police. So far.

In the June issue of the *Mensa Bulletin*, Jean K. Becker quoted Alvin Toffler: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

What foresight the man had! Nowhere is it truer than in wrestling with a computer. As soon as you start feeling confident in using the thing, you have to unlearn and relearn a new system or program. Since I work now as a Web site analyst, I need to keep a current operating system. At first I resisted this because it meant I would have to keep unlearning and relearning various procedures. Eventually, I accepted the inconvenience. Now I find it challenging, and I think it may help keep my mind from ossifying. I'm frequently amused, however, by my contemporaries who are still not online or, more amazing, still without computers. Furthermore, they are very creative in their explanations for this eschewal.

One retired man told me, "Oh, I always left the computer stuff to other people." He waved a hand dismissively, suggesting that such matters were way beneath his lofty executive self. Another oldster said, "Oh I wouldn't get on that Internet. Isn't there a lot of porn there?" A friend asserted: "I don't want to get started on the Internet.

I've heard that some people get addicted to it." Another friend summed up his philosophy: "I've never missed having a computer."

I accept their rationalizations with a nod, but I think I've figured out the problem—the reason no one really wants to give: They don't want to unlearn and relearn. So far I haven't found a single person who is willing to admit that. I guess they'd rather look uncool than unsmart.

Younger people have an easier time with computers. They can walk into any room, anywhere, and immediately operate TVs, VCRs, CD and DVD players, remotes, cell phones, hand-held thingamajigs and most anything electronic. They don't have to unlearn and relearn. Eventually they will, though, as today's gizmos are replaced by the next generation of doodads. Then they, too, will have to unlearn and relearn—or join the 21<sup>st</sup> century illiterati.

# NORTHERN MICHIGAN MENSA

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