

 **Borealis**
NORTHERN MICHIGAN MENSA

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 6

FEBRUARY 2005



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FEBRUARY

BOOK CLUB - Saturday, 5 February, 2005 at 12:30 p.m. We will meet at the Omelette Shoppe, 1209 E. Front Street. The book discussion this month will be on *Under the Skin* by Michel Faber. This group is open to all members. Attendance can be each meeting, or only for those books that you have an interest.

GAMES NIGHT - Tuesday, 8 February, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. We will meet at Borders Books and Music, located at 2612 Crossing Circle, Traverse City. Bring your favorite game and a willingness to have fun! Coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches, wraps, soups, and desserts are available for purchase.

EXCOMM - Saturday, 12 February, 2005, at 10:00 a.m. We will meet at Cottage Café in the Papa's Den. All members are welcome to attend.

BRUNCH - Saturday, 12 February, 2005, 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.

TGIF - Friday, 25 February, 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.



DIBS AND DABS

Our LocSec received a couple (maybe more) of complaints about the last issue. She passed that information along, with no specificities or names. She was told that the complainants were very welcome to submit their views for publication. So far, nada. For whatever reason, I, the male co-editor, put the last issue together and take full responsibility for its content.

A clutch of NMMensans will be manning the phones for Interlochen Public Radio's semi-annual radiothon fundraiser on the 17th of February between the hours of 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. If you are inclined to make a pledge, call in then, give us time to swallow the last bite of some obscene pastry, and we'll talk to you. The on-air talent are beginning to know of our group now and hopefully we will get some favorable mention as a recruitment tool.

Welcome back to Blake Brien Vance of Traverse City.

If you're into MindGames, they will be held in Tampa, FL, on 15-17 April 2005 and 21-23 April 2006 in Portland, OR. More details at the website www.mindgames.us.mensa.org.

And if you want to wander to the Gateway City of Saint Louis on 18-20 February, Saint Louis Area Mensa's Greatest Hits is an RG featuring wide open smoking, karaoke, great socialization (and don't forget Anheuser-Busch is just down the street).

By the way, the birds on the cover are cedar waxwings (according to my resident amateur ornithologist) - first she has ever seen live.

CULTURE QUEST® XVI IS ALMOST UPON US

For those of you who have played before, no explanation needed; but for those who haven't, what are you waiting for?

Culture Quest is game played by members of the U.S. and Canada Mensa simultaneously on Sunday, 10 April. This 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 dependant on the time zone in which you reside, we begin play at 4:00 p.m.

It is played by teams of up to five players, with one member being the captain. Each local group can enter multiple teams. Last year we entered four teams, I think. We normally meet in separate locations to play and after the game go to a local restaurant to commiserate on our knowledge, or sometimes, lack thereof. The answer sheets are submitted to American Mensa to tally the scores. The top 20 teams win cash awards, which are generally designated for the local scholarship fund.

So, who among you is ready to give this a shot again this year? If you are interested in playing, please let me know by Sunday, 13 February. The cost is \$40 per team, so the cost per person will be dependant on the number of players per team. Also, if you are interested in being the captain and/or allowing the team to play at your home, let me know that too! We can also use some people as alternates. Alternates would only play if someone previously signed up on the team cannot play at the last minute.

You can let Sherry know via email at kikiwon@hotmail.com; please put CQ2005 in the subject line. Or call me at 933-9272.

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Science is a mechanism, a way of trying to improve your knowledge of nature. It's a system for testing your thoughts against the universe and seeing whether they work.

Isaac Asimov (1920-1992)

GORILLAS IN RWANDA

Cliff Monahan



It was Clivercast and

drizzling. The hills were steep and slick and the vegetation unrelenting. We hacked across hillsides, traversed some bogs, and the up another slope. We found the bamboo that had been a recent snack of a gorilla family. The vegetation was so thick that it was impossible to tell what was what ---until HE MOVED!. The big male of the band of 30 gorillas. He was 40 feet up in a gargantuan tree. Amazing how small he looked until he began snapping tree limbs the size of Louisville sluggers to hurl down at us. Finally, the male swing into a smaller tree which broke under his weight and he swung right to the ground. The guide barked at us to freeze!

The male charged, swinging his massive arms in front of him as he galloped towards us, pounding at the ground with each leap forward. He stopped 10 feet from me a crouched down like a Mack truck waiting to pop its clutch , the equivalent of a bull pawing the turf. It was easy to tell he was upset. His shoulders were the widest part of his body, and he tapered up to the top of his head without a noticeable neck, just solid gorilla. I figured what the hell. If he was going to be aggressive, I was dead meat and I might as well have it on film so I pulled out the camera and got a couple of shots before he dropped into the jungle to circle around us and climbed another tree.

Cliff Monahan is a professor of Veterinary Medicine at OSU. He has a BS, DVM, and a PHD in Parasitology. He spent 3 years in the Peace Corps in Zaire. One of his goals in his younger life was to see whales, gorillas, and watch a volcano erupt. He has done all three at this point.

WANT TO WIN A MILLION BUCKS?

Jim Blackmore, National Marketing Director, AML

American Mensa has partnered with Urban Challenge.com, the leaders in intelligent gaming, to spread the word about a massive online game that will rouse the intellect and hopefully enhance the bank account of one of our own. The event, called *Urban Challenge Online* (UCO), is likely to be crowned the biggest game in history by Guinness, the world-renowned chronicler of such extraordinary accomplishments, and it's the perfect entertainment diversion for Mensans everywhere. People from all over the world are signing up hoping to produce a 200,000% return on their five-dollar registration fee. If the thought of applying your unique aptitude toward winning the big prize isn't enough motivation to register, do it for Mensa. **We want a Mensa team on the receiving end of the \$1,000,000 prize.**

What is Urban Challenge online? Based on the internationally acclaimed adventure racing series Urban Challenge, UCO is played out completely online. You and a friend set out on a race through cyberspace seeking to identify 12 "checkpoints". The checkpoint identities are discovered by solving - via intellect and the internet - 12 entertaining and shrewd clues. Be one of the first 10 teams to submit the correct answers to all 12 clues and you win an all-expense paid trip to New York City to compete in the event finals for the **One Million Dollar** prize.

Additionally, one other fortunate team - selected by a special lottery - will win the **GOLDEN TICKET** - an all-expense paid trip to New York City to play in the final round regardless of the level of success in the first round. The sooner you register, the more **GOLDEN TICKET** chances, the better the odds of winning the trip. Spread the word about *Urban Challenge Online* to everyone in Mensa so they, too, can be part of history and a Mensa team can collect the million dollar prize.

Members should follow this link to UCO and enter to play:
<http://www.urbanchallenge.com/online>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION -- When you register, you must enter the unique referral code word: **MENSA**. Enter the code word and you are entered into a semi-secret, separate drawing for two round-trip tickets to anywhere in North America. Good luck all.

AMC MEETING

Charlie Bruce, RVC3 (aka the "Gloater")

{The quarterly meeting of the AMC will be held in Columbus, OH, on 18-19 March of this year at the Signature Inn Columbus North (6767 Schrock Hill Court, Columbus; 614.890.8111).}

This is your chance to see how Mensa works at the National level. Friday night there will be sequential meetings of the various committees. Saturday morning and afternoon the entire AMC gathers for its quarterly business meeting. All Mensa members are welcome to attend at no charge. However, there will be a fee of \$20 for those who wish to eat and drink in the Hospitality Room. This fee includes Friday night dinner and Saturday lunch as well as snacks and beverages. There will also be a catered dinner Saturday night. Cost is \$15, you must RSVP by March 12. Following dinner on Saturday night there will be games and cards provided. To RSVP for questions, contact Red Bellamy at gonetothedogs@petsolutionsofcolumbus.com or 614.975.9289. Breakfast is provided to hotel guests at no charge and is \$1.75 for those not staying at the hotel. Room rate is \$64 + tax.

Roaming the Region

Charlie Bruce a.k.a. Gloater

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

It's the end of the month, I'm still on the road (currently in Dallas, Texas) yet my column is due and I'm not sure what I'm going to write about. I guess I should start with telling you about the Inaugural Voyage of the Gatherings At Sea SIG that Terry and I have just completed. Our thanks to Ray O'Conner for hosting a really fun trip, a five night cruise out of Galveston to Cozumel and Calica, Mexico. There were approximately 50 of us on board from all over the USA. Ray arranged to have the Card Room reserved every night so we could have our own "Hospitality Suite" and proceeded to keep us supplied with eloquent delights from his blender. (I still wonder what they thought about all the banana peels found in the trash in the men's room.) We also managed to have a DDCH tournament won by yours truly. They plan on doing another cruise later this year, destination TBD, so be sure to watch for it. They're a GAS.

I'm hanging around in Dallas awaiting the finance committee next weekend, then we drive over to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras en route to the Destin, FL RG the following weekend. We'll then stay in Destin for another two weeks on vacation. I've really got to get used to this retired life. Hopefully the ice and snow will be gone by the time we return.

I'll be in Columbus for March though, since we're hosting the quarterly AMC meeting on March 18th and 19th. Friday night are the various committee meetings and the AMC meeting is all day Saturday. After the meeting there will be a catered dinner (cost is \$15) followed by a games night. Since this is an election year, this will be the last meeting of the current AMC. Come and meet us and talk with those who will be running for various positions next term. Who knows, maybe it will help you make up your mind about who to vote for.