

Borealis

NORTHERN MICHIGAN MENSA

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 7

MARCH 2005



**GREEN RIVER NATURE SANCTUARY -
ANTRIM COUNTY**

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MARCH

NEW - MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP - Saturday, 5 March, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. We will meet at Beaners Gourmet Coffee, located at 1535 S. Division (in the Kids Creek Plaza across from Meijer). Attend the movie that is showing in The Art House which is located in the Horizon Cinemas, 3587 Market Place Circle, Traverse City. Attend the movie that is playing as of Friday, 4 March. Members can either attend the movie on Friday afternoon/evening, or the first viewing of the day on Saturday 5 March. (Movies change on Fridays so for this first movie don't attend before that as it may not be the same movie that we will be discussing

GAMES NIGHT - Tuesday, 8 March, 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.

BRUNCH - Saturday, 12 March, 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 March, 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

Guess what, the editorial staff does know how to spell “sanctuary” but the half-blind proofreader missed it. Thanks to John Porter for his photo/image submission way back when the new crew took over, but a snow picture in August didn’t seem quite right then. If you know not what the first sentence means, don’t go back and look at the cover. If you spotted it first off, you win an M&M.

A welcome to new member Alan Kohler of Northport.

Concern within the ExComm and the *Borealis* pressroom about the timeliness of publication. Late breaking news (aka, very late submissions) or no news at all make publication a bit difficult. Yes, an excuse, not a reason. Hopefully, things will get better.

The January issue of *InterLoc*®, a more limited publication of American Mensa, arrived in this co-editor’s mailbox in the last week of February. Putting timeliness in perspective.

This issue of *InterLoc* had several articles of particular interest from Mensans across the US. Quotes from some of them are of unique interest, but direct copy can’t be used based on the rules of the tight-short lawyers who seem to run American Mensa. But the gyst of them was that local newsletters are a forum for group members, for free expression of opinion (but with the usual caveat that religion, politics, and sex are verboten).

Already mentioned is your chance for a million bucks - go to the URBAN CHALLENGE website www.urbanchallenge.com,

Recognizing the value of connecting with a unique organization like Mensa. MSN Search has signed on as a corporate sponsor with special connections to three of American Mensa’s majors events this year: Colloquium 2005. MindGames®, and the Annual Gathering. As an event sponsor at Colloquium 2005, MSN is providing scholarships in support of this event, which will explore the problems and solutions of renewable energy.

AMERICA'S LEADERSHIP AT RISK

Robert J. Herbold

{The following is a very shortened version of a speech delivered by Mr. Herbold on May 25, 2004, at Hillsdale College. Among other credentials, Mr. Herbold is a member of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. An adaptation of his speech is in the February 2005 issue of *Imprimus*, the national speech digest of Hillsdale College www.hillsdale.edu).

K-12 ESTABLISHMENT IS PUTTING AMERICA'S INDUSTRIAL LEADERSHIP AT RISK

There are some very worrisome trends in the United States with respect to our global share of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics expertise. Our share of this expertise is decreasing significantly, both at the bachelor's and at the Ph.D. levels. Recently, the National Science Foundation published data demonstrating that our country is producing far fewer engineers than are other parts of the world, particularly Asia. China is producing three times more than the United States. (The US) again comes out very low - even compared to European countries - in terms of the percentage of bachelor's degrees awarded in the fields of engineering and science.

One of the main reasons why U.S. production of science and engineering talent in universities is low in comparison to other countries is that U.S. K-12 math and science skill levels are quite weak. The scores of U.S. students across the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels are abysmal.

We see the results of the International Math and Science Study. It rates the U.S. versus other countries and provides the percentile our students achieved. For example, in mathematics, our 12th graders rated at the 10th percentile. In other words, 90 percent of the countries did better than the U.S., and only 10 percent performed worse. While we do well in grade 4, we do mediocre in grade 8 and very poorly in grade 12.

Why are U.S. students so weak in science and mathematics? First, many of our K-12 students are being taught science and math by unqualified teachers. How can we expect a K-12 teacher who has no experience in the field to get a student excited about science or mathematics? It most likely won't happen - and it typically doesn't!

The second key problem is weak curricula. The National Commission on Excellence has recommended that public high schools require three years of mathematics and two of science. But only 45 percent of high schools meet that standard with respect to math, and only 24 percent with respect to science. Weak K-12 results in the U.S. are not a new problem. Twenty years ago, a famous report entitled "A Nation at Risk" was published and highlighted similar findings.

In light of this, we need the K-12 teaching community (the union leaders, the administrators and the teachers themselves) to take responsibility for the poor results they are achieving. We need them to get serious about accountability and teacher qualifications - two core elements of President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" program. Probably most important, the K-12 teaching community needs to implement good management practices, such as performance appraisal systems that identify superior teachers.

We need for the K-12 teaching community to take responsibility and implement these reforms in an urgent manner. If they do not, all of us in our individual communities need to hold that community to account. Failure to address our immense shortcomings in science and math education is unacceptable and will inevitably lead to the weakening of our nation.

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Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know it as well as you do. We are all learners, doers, and teachers.

Richard David Bach

NEW – MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP

Are you a movie buff? Did you ever see a really great movie and want to tell people about it? Wouldn't it be enlightening to see movies that you might not normally attend and then talk about it with other Mensans? Well, now is your chance!

Format of Club: One person will be responsible at each meeting to present background information about the movie. That could be information about the author of the script or book on which the movie was based; it could be pertinent information about the director or cast, or even the subject matter of the movie if it was historical in nature, etc.

Following this presentation, the group will have a "round-robin" discussion of each member's thoughts and ideas about the movie. This club is expected to go beyond the simple, "I liked the movie," or "The main character was so handsome." The club is intended for enjoyment, but some in-depth discussion is expected; well, isn't that a given with Mensans?

Meetings: We will meet on the first Saturday of the odd numbered months (March, May, July, September, and November). The first meeting will be on Saturday, 5 March and for this FIRST MEETING we will meet at 3:00 p.m. (or as soon as the movie gets out). The meeting will be held at Beaners Gourmet Coffee, located at 1535 S. Division (in the Kids Creek Plaza across from Meijer). BOOK CLUB MEMBERS DON'T WORRY; THIS GROUP MEETS ON THE OPPOSITE MONTHS SO YOU CAN ATTEND BOTH DISCUSSION GROUPS IF YOU WISH.

Movie: Attend the movie that is shown beginning on Friday, 4 March at The Art House which is located in the Horizon Cinemas, 3587 Market Place Circle, Traverse City. Members can either attend the movie on Friday afternoon/evening, or the first viewing of the day on Saturday 5 March. (Movies change on Fridays so for this first movie don't attend before that as it may not be the same movie that we will be discussing.

{Ed. Note: This is another opportunity to become involved with others of similar interests amongst Northern Michigan Mensans. And they have good popcorn there as well, a little pricey but you probably wont want supper.}

FROM (Y)OUR OMBUDSMAN

Pete Turkus

As Ombudsman of Northern Michigan Mensa, I thought I'd just bring you all up to date about problems in our group or with other groups. We haven't had any. This is wonderful. It means that if any members have had differences or disagreements with one another, they have either found a way to resolve the problem or have chosen to consider it "not a problem." Of course, I am also aware that other possibilities exist. Such as avoiding functions or quitting the group (or Mensa) as a result of feeling offended or marginalized or attacked or whatever. Those actions, we think, would be unfortunate. That's why Mensa has Ombudsman positions. Mensa realizes that exceptional people are strongly opinionated and sometimes not necessarily rational. This is not to say that bad situations arising from these conditions will always occur, but merely that it is understood that they do sometimes occur and so, a process to resolve them has been provided.

A conflict between members of our group can be brought to me directly by either disputant or jointly if they choose to have an argument mediated. All personal matters between disputants remain personal and confidential. The only time that a dispute would involve notification of the ExComm would be if the conflict were of a nature serious enough to threaten the entire group.

Having said that, I must also add that, even if a true conflict does not exist (perhaps a member feels uncomfortable about something or someone in the group) I'm happy to listen to concerns and make suggestions or just offer support.

So, please, enjoy our functions, our members company but if, for some reason you don't, remember that you can always talk to me.

{Personal note from RKH - Pete and I have had several chats over the past few months that have helped me through a road bump or two. Even though the role of ombudsman is not also as hospitaler, don't spend time at Munson without contacting Pete - as I have found out on a couple of occasions. Somehow he finds out.}

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ellen Monahan

Following is a summary report of the financial status and activities of Northern Michigan Mensa for the fiscal, and calendar, year 2004.

Account Balances - 1 January 2004

Checking	2274.87	
Savings	100.49	
Total		2375.36

Income (in aggregate)

National Office Allotment		
Regular Members	772.70	
Reinstated Members	3.00	
New Members	16.00	
Second Family Members	1.75	
Corporate Subscriptions	108.30	
RVC Funding	23.76	
Testing Fees	350.00	
Interest	28.70	
Friendship Fund	130.00	
Total		1434.21

Expense (in aggregate)

<i>Borealis</i>		
Preparation	335.07	
Postage	224.20	
Testing	7.70	
Office	4.18	
Total		

591.15

Account Balances - 31 December 2004

Checking	3117.57	
Savings	100.85	
Total		3218.42

LIVE FROM STUDIO A



Pictured above are four NMMensans (l-r, Ralph Hillquist, Pete Turkus, Sue Styles, and Jack Schultz) who did a stint taking pledges for the support of Interlochen Public Radio during the recent radiothon. No on-air interviews of our group, but quite adequate mention of our participation by the “talent.” Just a little example of Mensans giving back to the community.