

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". 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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VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.nmm.us.mensa.org

ON THE COVER: Carol Crawford, Melissa Rennie and Jim McDermott at the World Gathering. Photo by Sharon McDermott.

Northern Michigan Mensa

September 2006 Calendar

MOVIE CLUB - Saturday, 2 September 2006 - 2:00 p.m.

We will meet at LaSenorita located at 2455 N. US 31 S (near Sam's Club) for the discussion portion of our meeting. The movie title will be announced on 25 August via email and will also be posted on the NMM Web Page. If you don't have access to either of these, please call Sherry for the movie information at 231-933-9272. The movie will be shown at Horizon Cinemas, 3587 Market Place Circle, Traverse City. Movies change following the last showing on Thursday night, so don't wait until Friday the 1st as it may not be the same movie that we will be discussing.

ANNUAL PICNIC/POTLUCK - Saturday, 16 September 2006 - 12:00p.m. HELP CELEBRATE THE 4th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN MENSA.

Arrive at noon and plan to eat about 1 p.m. The big bash will be held again this year at the home of Jill Daniels which is located north of the village of Suttons Bay, in Leelanau County. The address is 2260 NW Bayshore Drive (Highway M-22) and signs alongside the highway will point to the Mensa Picnic. As you come north on M-22, go through the village of Suttons Bay to the flashing traffic light on the edge of town. Jill's place is about 3.5 miles north from that light and is on the right-hand side, approximately opposite Stallman Road. Her large property is on West Grand Traverse Bay (several hundred feet). We'll have opportunity to go swimming or play in the water. Bring kayaks, canoes, or waterfront toys. Children are welcome, but please leave dogs and other pets at home. No guns are allowed either! Please bring a dish to pass; it can be either a hot dish or cold. Also bring your own table setting and whatever you want to drink. If you bring a hot dish, bring a hot plate, skillet, or crock pot that can be plugged into an electrical outlet to keep things warm. The party will last as long as members want to stay, so bring games if that's your desire. NOTE: If you find yourself at the casino in Peshawbestown, you've gone too far; Jill's place is on the south side of Peshawbestown. If you need to contact Jill about anything, please phone her at 231-271-3997.

Please Note: Due to this event, we will not have our monthly brunch in September. Brunch will return October 14.

TGIF - Friday, 22 September 2006 - 6pm. (Note new location)

Come try our new location, Borders Books, 2612 Crossings Circle (Wal-Mart Plaza next to Toys R Us), Traverse City. We will meet in the cafe area. They have many beverages, pastries and cookies available.

Member News

Welcome

Welcome to new member **Karen Kennedy** of Traverse City. We're glad to have you with us, Karen.

Happy September Birthdays

- 1 Susan Lynne Pitzer
- 2 James H. McDermott
- 11 Travis G. Nelson
- 12 Stephen H. Quick
- 17 Timothy J. Niles
- 18 Richard J. Warden
- 22 Carola "Penny" Pollard Novarro
John D. Schultz

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of continuous Membership)

- 26 Years** Andrew W. Horujko
- 21 Years** Delberta R. Windiate
- 3 Years** Dwayne A. Bean
Harold A. Kranick
- 1 Year** Ryan J. Holowaty

Potential New Member?



Congratulations to Sue and Mark Styles on the birth of their new baby, Keegan Frederick Styles. He was born on July 17th and weighed 5 pounds ½ ounce. Sue is the treasurer of our local group. Both are doing well.

Group News By Sherry McNamara

The ExComm met at the end of July to decide upon, and make appointments for, several officer positions which were open.

The position of Webmaster was open because Stephen Siciliano will be going off to university in a few weeks. He has done a wonderful job in maintaining our webpage and we will miss seeing him regularly. There were several people interested in this position which made the decision process difficult. However, in the end, we appointed Susan Nolff as our new Webmaster. She and Stephen are in the process of exchanging information for a smooth transition.

We were also looking for a new Scholarship Chair. Dorothy Vogel has been in this position for the past couple years. She has led us through two successful years of awarding scholarships to local candidates. Patty Paternel was interested in taking over for Dorothy and has been appointed as the new Scholarship Chair. This too should be a smooth transition as Dorothy has done a wonderful job laying the groundwork for this program and will be passing that information to Patty.

Last, but not least, we needed someone to review the bank statements on a quarterly basis. When Ellen Monahan was the Treasurer, Sue Styles was doing double duty as Deputy Local Secretary and handled the quarterly reviews. Sue was knowledgeable in financial affairs and did a fine job in this capacity. Therefore, it was an easy conversion for her to move into the position of Treasurer, but that left us without someone to do the reviews. The ExComm immediately thought of Tom Barnhart for this since he is employed in the banking industry and he gladly accepted the appointment as the Financial Overseer.

As many of you may realize, it is hard to find volunteers to take on extra duties. We all lead busy lives, after all, don't all Mensans get involved in numerous, interesting activities? Anyway, to have people step up and willingly take on a role in our organization is commendable and I am proud to have such well qualified personnel working for Northern Michigan Mensa. Thanks everyone!

World Gathering

Several of our members attended the Mensa World Gathering in Orlando in August. Here are two views of that event.

Something for Everyone By Melissa Rennie

After waffling back and forth about whether or not I should attend the World Gathering, I was reviewing my lists of reasons "for" and "against" attending. Although the "against" list was long and varied, the "for" won out with only three items: the chance to meet not one, but two of my personal heroes and to spend half a week with friends. For those that have never been to a 'G (Mensan gathering), someone described it as trying to take a small sip from a fire hose. It is both refreshing and exhausting at the same time. Two friends and I made our way down Wednesday night to hear the featured speaker: Jean Auel, author of the *Earth Children* series and longtime Mensan. We were so thrilled that by the end of the talk we were calling ourselves groupies as we headed up to catch a few photos with one of our favorite authors. We had literally grown up with Auel's main character, Ayla, finding *Clan of the Cave Bear* before we were even teenagers.

The next night, I attended a lecture by myself (skipping my special interest group's pubcrawl) to meet a second hero of mine: Emily Lyons, who barely survived injuries sustained by a bomb blast at a Birmingham, Ala., clinic set by Eric Robert Rudolph (also responsible for the '96 Olympic bombing, another clinic bombing in Atlanta, and a gay nightclub bombing). Lyons was standing approximately 12 feet away from a bomb packed with dynamite and nails that killed off-duty police officer Robert Sanderson. Since her recovery, she has become an activist speaking out against violence toward reproductive health providers. Lyons, who spent most of the talk describing her injuries and her recovery, credited her second family -- friends that she had made through Mensa -- for helping her and her family through that trying time. I learned something that I hadn't known before; Lyons' husband, Jeff, was a longtime Mensan.

The chance to meet not just one, but two of my personal heroes, left me feeling giddy. And finding out that we all shared a common link of Mensa, left me walking on air. And that doesn't include the other events that I partook through out the WG:

- Talk - "Why do so many smart people not fulfill their promise?" who can resist a title like that? Mensa's Gifted Children's coordinator talks about understanding an individual's giftedness (her website is: www.educationaloptions.com).
- Talk - "What to expect once your book has been bought" Deanna Hoak, a freelance copy editor talks about her experience in the publishing industry (her blog is: www.deannahoak.com)
- Bikers vs. Brainers trivia contest (actually a scholarship fundraiser run by a Florida group)
- Talk - "A Mensan's life in Hollywood" Alan Rachins talks about life in Hollywood, including "L.A. Law" and "Dharma and Greg".
- Talk - "In the pursuit of Happiness"
- Talk - "Taker Talks Trump" by Tarek Saab, who was "fired" in the past season of "The Apprentice."
- Talk - "Discovering your passion - realizing your potential" which had to be moved to another room because attendance spilled over to the hallway.

I actively supported my SIG (GenX) by attending many of their functions, including hosting the GenX suite, which wouldn't have been so bad, but having five roommates for five days can be a bit trying. Other events that we sponsored included the Friday International Dance, a screening of "The Rock Horror Picture Show," and a dodge ball tournament to raise funds for MERF (Mensa Education and Research Fund.) The tournament sent two people to the hospital (twisted ankle and ruptured Achilles) and was covered by CNN's "Quest for" which from my understanding is part of their international programming. And people think "nerds" are docile and boring!

I also participated in SIG-only events including: Pretentious Drinking (which we stole from Chicago's RG, because it was so much fun), a four-hour shift in hospitality and hanging out at the Coronado's pool on Saturday night. I was also able to find, not sure how, fellow Mensans from Northern Michigan. Especially considering that there was over 2,000 Mensans wandering around, it was surprising that we ran into each other.

And that is just a summary of what I was able to do at the WG, and doesn't begin to tally all that I would have liked to do. I am already making plans for my next 'G, which will be Chicago's HalloweeM, which has the theme "SuperWeeM" (www.chicago.us.mensa.org/weem) where we will see what Mensans consider to be "superheroes." Also on my radar are Southeast Michigan Mensa's SEMMantics, which is the first weekend of May and next year's AG in Birmingham (www.ag07.com). The next couple AGs include: '08 in Denver and '09 in Pittsburgh. Of course, Ohio seems to always be

having an RG every 8-10 weeks - although, it may just seem like it. I still am not sure what I enjoy most about 'Gs, but it most likely the friends that I have accumulated along the way.

I Am Forever Changed **By Carol Crawford**

I walked into the hospitality room in a daze. I had traveled alone from Traverse City to Orlando, arrived late the night before to an airport hotel, awakened early to pick up my car and had made my way to Coronado Springs. It was only ten in the morning. I looked around and immediately thought maybe I would not fit in here. Everyone seemed so different from me, but then, they also seemed different from each other. Some looked like hippies, some like business people, and some like beach bums. I grabbed a snack, took a deep breath, and headed off.

The first program I had chosen was so full they had closed the doors and posted a sign to that effect. I scrambled to choose another session, humbly took a seat in the front row, and let the mind explosion begin. Hour after hour of thought-provoking sessions, from gifted children, to cognitive studies, to beading, to starting a speaker program for our group filled my head with ideas.

It wasn't just the presenters offering up their views. The attendees questioned and commented and discussions continued well beyond the session time limits and out into the hallways. All through my years at school I had resisted offering opinions and questioning speakers for fear that others would think my comments or questions were unfounded or stupid. Here I branched out and began to participate, and the result was the biggest ego boost I have ever experienced. Others considered what I said and commented on it. I never felt so appreciated and welcomed; they actually listened to what I had to say! It was then I realized I did fit in here, not because of the way I look or act, but because of the way I think. Others really do sit and ponder things the way I do, and even come to some of the same conclusions.

I wish I could detail each and every program, but there were far too many to even consciously remember them all. I was intrigued and interested at each session, but there are a few which have changed my life and the way I look at it forever. The first was the guided imagery. The presenter gently took us to a place somewhere between reality and hypnosis. This was a comfortable and familiar place for me; I am sure a different place for each person in the room. Once we were at our peaceful place, the presenter asked us to invite a special

person in our lives to join us. Perhaps it was someone with whom we needed closure, perhaps someone passed away or living. My father visited me there in that peaceful and comfortable place. He has passed on, but I did not need closure or advice or questions answered, I merely needed his presence. He said my son was a fine boy and that I only needed to continue to listen to my heart when deciding how to lead him along his path to adulthood. How wonderful to know he was watching and listening! I cried; I couldn't help it.

There were several sessions regarding the essence of reality and enlightenment. I found these to be very moving as well. The idea that you can heal your body by searching inside yourself and ridding your mind of useless clutter and guilt was very thought-provoking. I don't know if I believe it wholeheartedly, but intriguing nonetheless. I learned that peace and tranquility can be achieved by realizing that you cannot change what was, or really affect what will be, but you can decide how to feel about what is, as long as you are honest with yourself about what is. Again, I am not sure this works in practice, but it is certainly worth further reflection.

I suspect my son is extremely gifted. According to some of the presenters I spoke with, I need to remain mindful of this as we try to navigate public education together. He may need a special school later, or at least specialized education from me after regular school. I want to be sure he does not fall through the cracks of our education system. The best quote on this subject: "Remember that the teacher has to teach to the least intelligent student in the class." This to me means my son needs to be challenged separately from formal schooling.

As you can tell, I am now a huge fan of gatherings. I will be attending many more in the future now that I know how stimulating and enlightening they can be. I don't know if all of my future gatherings will bring the same result, but as for this World Gathering, I am forever changed.

Regional Vice Chair

RVC Thoughts

By Dave Swanka

Hello friends, neighbors and fellow Mensans throughout the region. Having just attended the World Gathering in Orlando, I can say it's good to be back home. Dozens of column writers are probably writing about their experiences there, so I'll keep my comments about it short. With over two thousand attendees, it was quite the gathering. The accommodations were exceptional, the convention center superb (Disney Coronado Springs Resort and Convention Center), and the programming varied and well presented. I can only speak for the programs I attended because there were so many and usually more than one at any given time. Quite impossible to see them all. My personal favorite was entitled "Great Lakes Lighthouses", a local subject and one holding great interest to me. While I am well read on the subject, I didn't realize some were converted into bed and breakfast, another into a youth hostel, and others offering accommodation in exchange for labor to upkeep them. You never stop learning. Also very rewarding was meeting international Mensans; the globe was well represented. The only drawback was, as I feared, the tropical climate. Devil's Island, the Panama Canal Zone, and the Mayan Jungles, all came to mind whenever I stepped outside. This may be great in December, but Orlando in August is flat out oppressive. But I'm sure there are good points to it like.....?

Before I forget again, I would very much like to congratulate two friends of mine, fellow local board members, and all around active WNY Mensans Jaclyn and Dave McKewan, who were married in July. Dave is my local treasurer and Jaclyn a member at large and web master. Mensa does bring people together in a positive way.

Congratulations are also in order for the following regional members and their editors who won Special Mention in the Publications Recognition Program (PRP):

Jim Szirony, Cleveland, CAM Kids articles;

Sally Yocum, Columbus, Limericks poetry;

Ferron Talobe, Cleveland, Fifty Years in Rio, humor;

Tony Homminga, West Michigan, Wednesday Afternoon in the Patagonian Andes, Sans Island, artwork.

Congratulations are also in order for the Hexagone Crazy Culture Quest Team, Cincinnati, which came in 15th nationally. For those of you who have never

participated in Culture Quest, you walk away from it thinking that your group is going to be dead last - it is that challenging. Well done all, your efforts and contributions are noticed and appreciated!

In my travels (I drove to the WG) I heard a phrase which, while never hearing it expressed quite in those words, summarized one of my core beliefs. An older waitress was behind the counter of a Waffle House filling a basket with sugar, Sweet and Lo, and other packets when she dropped it. Her coworker exclaimed "What a mess!" to which the older waitress replied "Don't sweat the little stuff!" and promptly tidied up and was back on track in less than a minute, unagitated and not rattled in the least. Had I heard that phrase before I wrote last month's comments on civility, I would have included it. When it comes to life's trying moments, especially when dealing with fellow Mensans, "Don't sweat the little stuff", get on with the important tasks at hand.

Speaking of important tasks at hand, National Mensan elections take place early next year. This statement is aimed at you who are long time Mensans, but barely active or perhaps not active at all. If you do nothing else next year, vote! Get your money's worth and take a minute to select candidates. If you know and like a candidate's platform, try to vote them in. If you dislike or disagree with it, vote them out. If you don't know either way and are totally unfamiliar with the topics, educate yourself with them or at least vote according to your default methods. Everyone has a default method of voting when they don't know the candidates- looks, sound of name, reminds you of someone, whatever. Follow the election in the Mensa Bulletin and when the time comes, execute your right to be heard and vote.

Yes, I will be running for RVC3. This is not a paid political advertisement. The most important item I can bring to the table is an upfront honesty to represent you and protect our local groups. Vote as you wish, but vote. Please be fair though, and if you have an item of concern, bring it to my attention for action before condemning me for doing nothing.

Thank you all for your cooperation so far. I've met some of you at the Columbus RG and at the WG, and will meet more at the Pittsburgh, East Central Ohio, and Cincinnati RGs. For the vast majority of you who do not attend the gatherings, get to know me through my columns or contact me directly with any questions or concerns you have. My telephone number is (716) 833-5549, e-mail at rvc3@us.mensa.org or summit95@usadatanet.net. Hope to hear from you soon.

Peace on Earth By Ruth Minshull

The other day I was watching a hummingbird slurping his dinner at the feeder while I ate mine in the dining room. I enjoyed our having dinner together so peacefully. But it was not to last.

Another hummingbird showed up and started dive-bombing the first one. This brought an abrupt end to the peaceful dinner hour. First guy took off after the intruder and they swirled around over the patio. Then a third bird appeared, and joined the fracas. They all chased their opponents around for a time, and then left. While they never touched or physically harmed one another, they successfully kept their enemies (and themselves) away from the feeder. Perhaps they were also flinging vile curses at each other in low-volume hummingbird language:

Get out of here, you gnat-brained maggot.

I was here first, you worthless wuss.

Don't call me a wuss, you fugitive from a feather duster...

What's the matter with them? I wondered. There's plenty of food; and enough space for all, with four access holes in the feeder. But, obviously, "They just don't play well with others, and they won't share." Why can't they be compatible? Here they are, tiny little creatures, less than four inches long, weighing about one-twelfth of an ounce, and they feel compelled to scrap over who gets to eat. I have read that the males spend most of their time in battle with each other—over territory and feeding areas. The females fight to defend their nests.

I would like to believe that they are happy, shimmering beauties--nature's works of art--put on earth for the visual pleasure of all. But no, they apparently have their own little world full of angst, misery and frustrations.

After a lifetime of observation, I've concluded that *all* living things are hardwired for combat. We always seem to have one faction of people dedicated to trying to make everybody play "nice," while all the rest are at war. It starts out at an early age. If you've ever done time in a room with more than one child, you know they don't come into this life looking for peace. They'll get into disputes over toys, games, territory or anything. (*Mom, he's looking at me!*) Families scrap among themselves; neighbors clash with one another routinely; schools scuffle against other schools on various playing fields (and sometimes in the street); people unite into groups in order to oppose other groups. And so it goes, right up to nations.

I'm not a history expert, but I doubt there's ever been a time when there wasn't a conflict going on somewhere, ranging from petty bickerings to the dropping of hugely destructive bombs. Now and then attempts are made to resolve differences between two battling factions. Periodically world leaders are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for these efforts. Since the "peace" never seems to last, I often wonder why the bigwigs receive such prizes--maybe just for showing up? It's time we face the truth. Wherever there are living beings, there will be wars, conflicts, clashes, skirmishes, disputes and free-for-alls. I'll bet that if we examined them closely, we'd find that even tiny amoeba are slugging it out with another species of amoeba over squatting rights within a blob.

Where did we ever get the idea that living creatures want peace?

August Brunch

The August brunch was well attended with an overflow (of the main table) crowd. Photo by Stan Cain.



Treasurer's Report

Northern Michigan Mensa Statement of Income and Expenses January 1, 2006 through August 15, 2006

	Budgeted	YTD	Remaining
Income			
National Office Allocation	\$850.00	\$580.14	\$269.86
Testing Fees	\$300.00	\$65.00	\$235.00
Interest	\$25.00	\$17.02	\$7.98
Total	\$1,175.00	\$662.16	\$512.84
Expenses			
Newsletter	\$800.00	\$304.36	\$495.64
Office/Incidentals	\$25.00	\$15.15	\$9.85
Activities/Programs	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
Publicity	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
Scholarship	\$600.00	\$520.00	\$80.00
Proctor/Testing	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00
Stipend for Regional/Nat. Events	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$150.00
Total	\$1,975.00	\$839.51	\$1,135.49
Total Income Less Expenses	-\$800.00	-\$177.35	-\$622.65
Friend Fund			
Balance	\$160.00	\$52.00	\$108.00
Net Expenditures		\$229.35	

Northern Michigan Mensa Bank Balance Reconciliation January 1, 2006 through August 15, 2006

	1/1/06	Net Change	8/15/06
Checking	\$2,648.89	-\$229.53	\$2,419.36
Savings	\$101.21	\$0.18	\$101.39
Total	\$2,750.10	-\$229.35	\$2,520.75