

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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March 2008

 Borealis
Northern Michigan Mensa

www.nmm.us.mensa.org

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Mensa:

Mensa's constitution lists three purposes: to identify and foster human intelligence for the benefit of humanity; to encourage research into the nature, characteristics, and uses of intelligence; and to provide a stimulating intellectual and social environment for its members.

Mensa accepts individuals who score at or above the 98th percentile on certain standardized IQ tests, such as the Stanford-Binet.

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 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.

Deadline:

The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month before the month of publication. Submissions received after that time may be considered if time and space permit.

Advertising:

At this time Borealis does not accept advertising from either members or non-members.

Email:

nmmnewsletter@hotmail.com

US mail:

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Northern Michigan Mensa Executive Committee

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

ON THE COVER: February Brunch. Shown left to right: Sawyer and Carol Crawford, Tom Barnhart, Jim McDermott, Stan Cain and Dwayne Bean. Not shown: Lou Isabell. Photo by Jack Schultz.

Northern Michigan Mensa

March 2008 Calendar

MOVIE CLUB – Saturday, 1 March 2008 at 11:00 a.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 29 February via email and will also be posted on the webpage. If you don’t have access to either of these, please call Sherry McNamara for the movie information at 231.933.9272. The movie will be shown at Horizon Cinemas, 3587 Market Place Circle, Traverse City or possibly the new State Theater downtown.

SPECIAL BRUNCH! - Saturday, 8 March 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

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

Join us for a talk by **John Flesher**, the Northern Michigan correspondent and an environmental writer for the Associated Press, on current issues that he is following. John is based in Traverse City. His work is featured in large and small newspapers across Michigan and the Midwest, with many articles carried on the national wire service.

TGIF – Friday, 28 March, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.

This is our monthly, end-of-the week get together to unwind and chat. We will meet in the Horizon Shine Café located in the lower level of Horizon Books, 243 Front Street, Traverse City. They have coffee, soft drinks, sandwiches, wraps and desserts available.

Member News

Happy March Birthdays

3 Margaret J Scott 30 Sherry Marie McNamara
26 Charles R Fricke

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of Continuous Membership)

26 Years William Earl Hagan 6 Years Sherry Marie McNamara
S Schellenberg
21 Years Harold William Smith M K Shaw
S A Styles
13 Years L Corpe 4 Years T L Slater
8 Years J A Thorne 2 Years Jonathan D Nelson
7 Years Charles R Fricke 1 Year Thomas Rasmussen

Welcome to Northern Michigan Mensa

Brian S Kelley Jennifer Lapoint

Welcome back to Northern Michigan Mensa

G Myles

| January 2008 Statistics | AML | NMM |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Total membership | 53769 | 97 |
| New and reinstating membership | 714 | 3 |
| Offers of membership | 251 | 0 |
| New members since April 2007 | 3715 | 10 |
| Reinstating members since April 2007 | 2205 | 9 |

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 1/31/08. If you would like to change the privacy releases on file, go to www.us.mensa.org and click on “Member Login”. Then click on “Profile Update” and “PDQ Update”.

Mensans Volunteer at Interlochen Public Radio

Five members of Northern Michigan Mensa will man the phones on March 4 at Interlochen Public Radio’s mid-winter campaign to raise funds for station support. Those on the team are: Pete Turkus, captain; Tom Barnhart, Jim McDermott, Lou Isabell and Jack Schultz.

Something New At Interlochen

By Jack Schultz

In an attempt to discover new activities which members of Northern Michigan Mensa may find of interest, we've made contact with Anne-Marie Oomen who is director of the Creative Writing Program at the Interlochen Arts Academy. She tells us that they have periodic readings by well-known authors (and some who may not yet have "arrived"), and we are welcome to attend these FREE sessions. On days when such authors are on the Interlochen campus to read from their works, there is a Question-and-Answer session held in the afternoon preceding an evening reading. Members of the public are welcome to attend both sessions. Two such events are coming up during March, on the 6th and on the 13th. All sessions are held in the Great Room of the Writers House on the Interlochen campus.

March 6: Guest writer is **Dorianne Laux**, a noted poet. Q&A session at 2 p.m., with reading by the poet at 7:30 p.m.

March 13: Guest writer is **Pam Houston**, a noted short story writer. Q&A session at 2 p.m., with reading at 7:30 p.m.

Then, for those who are interested in the writings of **Barry Lopez**, a noted writer who emphasizes the natural world and environmental concerns, he will present the keynote address for the Interlochen Symposium for Writers and Educators at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 12. That talk will be in Corson Auditorium on the Interlochen campus and there is a charge of \$10.00 to attend.

The Terms of Nature By NMM Member John Porter

The Michigan Nature Association is one of the influentially preeminent environmental organizations in Michigan. Created in 1952, within 32 years it had established 99 nature sanctuaries in which were growing all tree species native to Michigan. It manages its 164 preserves by combining the efforts of expert staff with those of volunteer sanctuary stewards.

I was prompted to volunteer to "take care of" two MNA sanctuaries in Antrim County because of a belief in the value of stewardship, a concept with roots in Biblical passages including the 23rd Psalm (green pastures and still

waters....walking paths of righteousness). Much thought and research has led me to somewhat abandon that stance. It now seems domineering of and condescending to nature's work to think that humans can "protect" nature. If anything, nature needs to be protected *from* us rather than *by* us.

My thinking has evolved to accept as a more legitimate and intellectually honest ideology, the Gaia philosophy. Without pretending to be an expert on this, I will say that I believe we must acknowledge that we are an integral part of our natural environment, neither above it nor in control of it nor apart from it.

Conducting "field trips" into the sanctuaries can be seen to be a testing of the Gaia theory. It was with this thought that I offered to conduct a snow shoe tour for MNA members with an optional camping experience.

It was quite cold - nine degrees - at the Green River Nature Sanctuary north of Mancelona that Saturday in mid-January. Three hours before the others were to arrive, another camper and I took our equipment back to the river, about a half mile from the road. We set up camp on adjacent DNR land since camping is not permitted in the sanctuary.

After six of us explored the sanctuary's interior on snow shoes for a couple hours, it was back to the tents for the two of us. A quick dinner of re-hydrated entrees ended with the ominous conclusion that it was time to collapse into our tents.

You may wonder what one thinks about while lying in a tent for 14 straight hours of cold darkness. You will ask yourself where your gaze should settle after the 9-hour candle in your candle lantern lasts only one hour. And then there is the conundrum of what you should do when your head lamp is available but you are so exhausted and so cold that you can not imagine removing your arms from inside the sleeping bag to put the lamp on your stocking-capped head.

Then what is likely to come to your mind are a few repressed apprehensions and fears. You wonder if you drank enough water while you were very actively snowshoeing and sweating. You wonder how much dehydration is needed to prompt hypothermia - were the two cups of water needed to re-hydrate your chicken and rice dinner enough? Then you carefully consider whether you can remember all the signs of hypothermia and if you will have the good sense to disturb your camping buddy for help, should you notice any of those signs in the ensuing hours.

After your toes warm up, you feel much better about yourself. It was a stroke of genius to realize that they were, absolutely, not going to warm up, and you compliment yourself when you realize that it was another stroke of genius for you to have thought enough ahead to bring dry wool socks. And even more brilliant was the foresight to not have left them in the truck parked by the road.

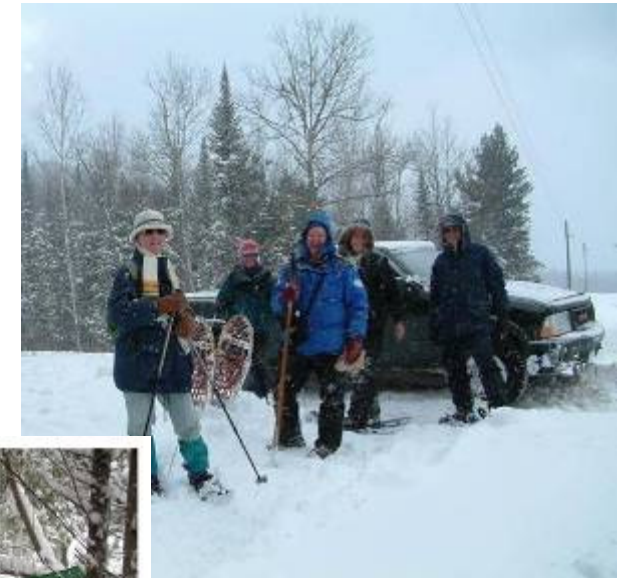
So with warm toes, you begin to float in and out of sleep. But before too long, fears arise again. Are you going to have to get up in the middle of the night to take care of any bodily functions? Good Lord, you pray, hopefully not.

You again think of switching on your head lamp in order to check your watch. You don't want to get depressed by checking too soon and finding that it is much earlier than you guessed, so you delay the time-check. At the very least you delay this action until your curiosity and your bladder demand action. You are relieved to find that it is 12:30AM. The 14-hour darkness is exactly half over.

The rest of the night is surprisingly calm. At a certain point you realize that you are completely comfortable both physically and mentally. You feel warm and sometimes almost hot, as your breathing becomes smooth, rhythmic, and slow. Finally, just as thoughts fade, you envision yourself meditating and counting breaths during *sesshin*, and you find no thoughts bouncing around inside your skull. You can not identify any fears or any emotions at all, since the thoughts necessary to process sensations have disappeared. You are not asleep, so your very limited cognition allows this recollection of nothingness to register. You are in a meditative state of suspended animation...lying on the ground...inside a tent.....in the middle of winter. How cool!

It is in the act of sharing oneself with nature, and neither submitting to a supposed dominance over it nor trying to paternalistically protect it, that a person becomes one with Gaia. Accepting all of one's vulnerabilities and fears, letting them surface and eventually fade away seems an act of communion. As is experienced in Zen meditation, thoughts of one's self differentiated from others and separate from nature seem incomprehensible because, in terms of the Gaia philosophy, being apart from, above and in control of nature, is not possible.

Following page photos taken at or near the Green River Nature Sanctuary by John Porter



The LocSec's Login

**By Jack Schultz
NMM LocSec**

Time was when we wondered what direction Northern Michigan Mensa was traveling. We have sort of been stuck in a rut in terms of numbers of members ever since the second year after we separated from Western Michigan Mensa – 2002. At this point in the membership year, we're a couple ahead of last year but still shy of the 100 mark. Not that numbers are all important in Mensa; it's the good times and camaraderie we share that makes being a member important to most of us. Still, if those of us who participate in NMM activities enjoy ourselves, it's easy to conclude that if we had more members *more* people could enjoy themselves.

Our activities in northern Michigan really got going back in 1978 when Art Montagne (since deceased but fondly remembered by many of us) and I found that we were both members of Mensa who had joined elsewhere. It took a long time before we got to where we had a critical mass of members in the North Country which could sustain a local group. Many of those people had joined elsewhere, but we also mounted a testing campaign that was successful in adding a large number of new members. That campaign continues today but it isn't having quite the success it did starting about eight or nine years ago.

Your Executive Committee (ExComm) is spending time trying to figure out how we can make membership in Mensa attractive enough to bring in new members and to entice back some of those who have let their memberships lapse. You can expect to see some new events offered during this coming year, and we will enlist the support of some of you to help us reach out to former members who still live in northern Michigan. If you have an idea of an activity which you and others might enjoy, please contact any of us on the ExComm (see listing and contact info toward the front of this issue of *Borealis*).

A New Direction

Since I've already mentioned that NMM began as a part of Western Michigan Mensa, let me say that the few of us who were here in the late-1970s soon became known as the "Traverse City Area Subgroup" of WMM. Mensa encourages local groups to recognize that, while there may be one or two main cities in a group's territory where a majority of the membership resides, many members live in communities where they are the only Mensans around, or maybe there may be two or three others there. Hence, provision is made for the recognition of "subgroups" within a local group. In my opinion, we have now reached the point where parts of our NMM territory have the potential for establishing subgroups. One of these might be the area around Manistee and

Ludington. While there aren't lots of members in that area, there might be enough so that members could get together several times a year (or more frequently if they wish) and find greater benefit to their membership. The same goes for the area from Charlevoix to Petoskey to Harbor Springs. A subgroup in that area might be able to attract members from as far away as Alpena, Onaway, St. Ignace, and Gaylord. The Traverse City area will undoubtedly remain the major center of activities for our local group, but it is certainly possible that other areas such as those mentioned could serve members closer to home.

How do we accomplish this? First and foremost, one or two people in each area must feel that what I've just written is correct and then commit themselves to taking on a leadership role. All they need to do is to reach out to other members and say, "Hey, let's get together to see if we can find enough members to make it work in our area." Your officers on the ExComm stand ready to provide you with the names and contact information for members in your part of our territory...if you want to explore this idea.

Last Call for CQ XIX

By Stan Cain

This is the LAST call for members to sign-up to play Culture Quest (CQ) XIX. The game will be held on Sunday, 27 April at 4:00 p.m. The deadline to register has been extended to 15 March so there is still time to sign up. I must organize teams and submit the registration form by the end of March.

In the past, we have had several teams from Northern Michigan Mensa competing in this exciting event. We will need participants and hosts/hostesses. To host a team, you will be welcoming team members into your home for the 90 minute testing period. You will also be responsible for keeping the testing materials safe until test time, filling out the proper paperwork (minimal) and mailing the answer sheets as soon as the test is completed. To participate, you will be placed on a team based on your geographical location.

All team members (primary players and alternates) must be dues-paid members of American Mensa for fiscal year 2008-2009 as of April 1, 2008. Team entry fee is \$40 per team (four to five members).

Contact me via email at sdcmem@yahoo.com and please put CQ2008 in the subject line or you can call me at 231-938-1506 if you would like to play.
