

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 6 Number 8

May 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.

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Northern Michigan Mensa

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

ON THE COVER: Bloodroot in bloom at the Treat Farm. This is located near the Empire Bluff Trail where this month's wildflower hike will occur. Photo by Jack Schultz.

Northern Michigan Mensa

May 2008 Calendar

ANNUAL SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE - Sunday, 4 May, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.
 Jack Schultz will again lead us on a hike to enjoy the spring wildflowers. It will be at the Empire Bluff Trail in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. We will meet at the trailhead just south of the village of Empire. Those coming out from Traverse City should take M-72 into Empire and turn left at the traffic light. Follow M-22 as it goes south out of town and then turn right onto Wilco Road. The trailhead is on your left less than one-half mile from M-22. Anyone coming north on M-22 should turn left onto Wilco Road less than a mile south of Empire. The hike will take us through a hardwood forest and eventually end on the face of the Empire Bluff looking out over Lake Michigan. Length of the round-trip hike is about 1.5 miles and there are a couple of rather steep pitches to the trail but it is well traveled and firm. After the hike, those who wish can assemble at the Empire Village Inn on M-22 for a light supper or brew (or both). We should arrive there by 4 p.m.

BRUNCH - Saturday, 10 May, 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.

EXCOMM Meeting, Saturday, 10 May, 2008 at about 1:00 p.m.
 The NMM Executive Committee will meet at Cottage Café in the Papa's Den immediately after the brunch. All elected and appointed members should attend and any other members are more than welcome to stay and sit in also.

TGIF - Friday, 23 May, 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.

Next Month (Details in the June Issue)

BOOK CLUB - Saturday, 7 June, 2008
 The Bibliomensans book for June will be *The Rape of Nanking: The forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, by Iris Chang, presented by Melissa Rennie.

CAMPING WEEKEND - Friday, 20 June through Sunday, 22 June, 2008.
 The event will take place at the Cedar Creek Campground in Manton.

Member News

Happy May Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|-------------------------|
| 7 | Harold A Kranick | 18 | Kymerli A Wregglesworth |
| 8 | Aaron Stander | 19 | Robin E Wottowa |
| 9 | Julie L Hill | 20 | Laura A Weiss |
| 13 | Trevor L Dunson
Ryan B Nelson | 22 | Judith W Lindenau |
| 14 | Floyd Erin John Fitzsimmons | 28 | Marc Batway |

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of Continuous Membership)

- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 28 Years | Suzanne L Cook | 5 Years | C L Dickson
Laura A Weiss |
| 8 Years | B Begeman | 4 Years | Dorothy Vogel |
| 7 Years | E Monahan | 1 Year | Jessica Mary Eberly
Shaun E Roark |

Welcome to Northern Michigan Mensa

Rufus S Teesdale Susan M Kraus Bernard Hanchett

Welcome back to Northern Michigan Mensa

Kenneth F Bryson

February 2008 Statistics	AML	NMM
Total membership	56006	103
New and reinstating membership	1292	4
Offers of membership	326	1
New members since April 2007	4608	13
Reinstating members since April 2007	4286	15
Members leaving group		1

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 3/31/2008. 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".

The LocSec's Login

By Jack Schultz
NMM LocSec

As I write this column, I'm not sure just how many of our members will have renewed for the coming year...or longer. At the end of March, only 18 of our 103 members hadn't renewed, and this is gratifying because that number is fewer than has been the norm at the end of Mensa's membership year. Of course, I suspect that quite a few of those 18 will eventually sign up again. People join and then leave organizations all the time, but we've been fortunate in having a solid core of members now for quite a few years.

Mensa's national office tells us that somewhat more than half of the people who join do so by submitting evidence from tests other than those which are administered by Mensa's volunteer proctors. Statistics for our group bear that out, too; so it doesn't take too many people qualifying on the tests we administer to keep our numbers up.

In a society such as Mensa, it is difficult to provide a consistent program that will satisfy each member's hopes for what he or she wishes to find in Mensa. Although some may disagree with my assessment, I believe that the majority of those who get much out of Mensa are social individuals. That's why we have a brunch and a TGIF each month (usually the 2nd Saturday and the 4th Friday, respectively). Talking with others about movies we've seen and books we've read has provided members with opportunities to express themselves and learn what others think. Mensa can do many different things to enhance members' enjoyment and not all of them need be social in nature. We'll discuss some of these other options in a future column.

New Leadership

We have the pleasure of announcing that Susan Kraus has agreed to take on the position of Program Chair. She has plunged right in since joining Mensa in March and has already scheduled a family-oriented weekend camping event in June. You'll find more about that elsewhere in this issue. It should be a fun time for all who join in, and the schedule is flexible enough so that people can come and go at their leisure all weekend long. We hope for a good turnout, but even if only a few participate they should have a good time.

Another relatively new member, Jennifer LaPoint of Petoskey, has stepped forward to volunteer as Coordinator of the Petoskey Area Subgroup of WMM. She is busy getting organized to contact all members who live north of a line drawn between Elk Rapids and Grayling...and northward. All NMM members

will be welcome to attend whatever event Jennifer uses to launch the subgroup, but the hope is that some of the 30 or so members in that area will make an effort to participate. You can be sure that I and some others from the Traverse City area will try to get there.

In-Between

On April 14, Joanne and I were spending the week at a timeshare resort near Boyne City (Mountain Run at Boyne). We were joined that day by Stan and Dorothy Cain and the four of us, after spending the day in the Petoskey area, met up with NMM member Teri Daunter and her husband, Jim, for supper at a nice eatery at Boyne Mountain Lodge. It was the first social occasion we had been able to enjoy with the Daunters and I hope it won't be the last. That's one really nice thing about Mensa; good friendships can develop almost overnight...and they can last a lifetime.

In closing, let me again thank Susan and Jennifer for stepping up to the plate to join our Executive Committee. We all look forward to working with you to make Mensa provide just what members are looking for.

THE BATTLE

By Ruth Minshull

I have often been annoyed when I read obituaries with the phrase: "He died after a brave battle with cancer." Why always that tiresome cliché: "a battle?" We don't say that about Alzheimer's disease or heart trouble or a broken hip. Well, I found out that dealing with cancer sometimes *is* a battle. But it can be won.

It was mid-summer last year when a CAT scan revealed a tumor in my pancreas. My doctor referred me to a surgeon, telling me, "You may need an operation, but you can do this; you're strong. You can get through it."

Gulp!

I had already dealt with breast cancer twice. But this one was a biggie. I had never known anyone who had survived pancreatic cancer. The surgeon confirmed that an operation would be necessary, but it was dangerous. The chance of my survival was less than 20%. When I asked about the possibility of radiation or chemotherapy treatment, he said that neither was effective with this type of cancer. Surgery was the only treatment. "Do you perform this procedure often?" I asked. "No, only one or two each year."

Next he sent me to a pre-op clinic to determine whether I would be physically able to endure the process. After extensive testing and examination, one of the doctors there told me, "We're going to approve you for the surgery, but you should know that it's very risky. Unfortunately you have only two choices. You can do nothing--the result is obvious. Or you can have surgery--but it is risky." He paused, then added, "I wish there were a third option, but there isn't. Although I must stress that it is risky." At the third *risky* I lost my sense of humor.

While I waited for the surgeon's office to arrange a date for the procedure, I decided that it was time to inform my family of the situation. My oldest son was not willing to accept the gloomy prognosis I'd been given so, recruiting a network of friends around the country, he launched an exhaustive research effort. Finally, at his recommendation, I went down to the Pancreatic Cancer Clinic at the University of Michigan Hospital. (Needless to say, they treat more than one or two cases each year.)

I was tested, examined and interviewed by numerous oncologists--all professors at the university. The surgeon said, "Here we throw everything we've got at it." Finally, an oncologist told me that I would qualify for a clinical trial they were conducting. It would consist of three weeks of radiation, two months of chemotherapy, then surgery (if feasible) and finally, another two months of chemotherapy. Only 15 patients at the U of M Hospital would be in the program. Three other major research hospitals were also participating.

I accepted this opportunity, certain that they wouldn't have selected me for the study unless they believed I had a good chance of survival. Furthermore, no one used the words "risky" or "dangerous." No one mentioned the odds of surviving. Rather, the atmosphere was one of optimism and confidence.

For the next six months I endured the various stages of treatment, and went through surgery in early January. The chemo and radiation had greatly reduced the tumor, making the procedure easier and faster. After five weeks of recovery, I resumed the chemo treatments.

I have now finished the last one. I'll return next month for a CAT scan and an examination. After that, I will go for only quarterly checkups. So, I made it. It *was* a battle--not only against the disease itself, but against the cure too!

Altogether, I've lost 50 pounds over the last year; I look like I've been in a concentration camp; and I've had to face the cruel fact that I'm probably not going to be Miss America.

I wouldn't say I was particularly brave throughout the experience; I was very frightened. So, instead of, "She died after a brave battle with cancer," I would probably say, "She lived after a cowardly battle with cancer." Still, I won the battle--with the wonderful help and support of friends and family--cards, letters, prayers, good wishes and words of encouragement flowed my way during those worrisome months (starting with *You're strong. You can do this*).

My purpose in relating this is to pass along two major insights from my experience:

- 1) Don't give up too easily, and
- 2.) If the news is not good, get a second opinion. In fact, get three or four or more--until you hear one you like. Remember, it's an *opinion*.

Now, where did I leave that sense of humor? I'm sure it's around here someplace...

Regional Vice Chair

RVC 3 Thoughts Spring '08 By Dave Swanka

Hello all! I hope everyone is finally enjoying our late in coming springtime. Here it is the first week in April and crocuses are just beginning to bloom. Our latest AMC meeting was held in San Francisco, which apparently does not experience our idea of winters. A truly beautiful, functional city - with palm trees. Any place where palm trees grow is fine with me, especially at the end of March. I have to give a special thank you to the Bay area members who hosted this meeting, especially Mike Eager, Susan Heimlich, Barbara and her husband Tom, and Alan Winson. Their hospitality exceeded any expectation I might have entertained, and certainly was well received.

This meeting, being the one where the budget is approved, was especially important. Other topics were discussed and decided upon, but the financial

ones were most poignant. Unfortunately I have to report that a "spend as you go" attitude prevails within the AMC. While I consider many of our fiscal actions as bordering on being irresponsible, it is my duty as a board member to uphold and support actions approved by the AMC. It is my fervent hope, though, that the membership uses the next election to materially change the course we're presently headed on. Increasing spending in the name of providing marginally utilized services and programs and increasing dues to finance this spending is neither fiscally sound nor sustainable. The following synopsis of the motions and results are of course unofficial and my personal take on things - but I was there and most discussion and attitudes are not reflected in the official minutes.

1. The discussion items I can't really comment on other than to say there is definitely a lack of firm direction in the areas of testing, the hearings committee, and the planning committee. It's not possible for the AMC to move forward when the staff and committees charged with given areas of responsibility do not know and cannot recommend firm and decisive courses of action. Too much of an attitude of "we tried this back in 1900 whatever and it didn't go anywhere" prevails.

2. The bylaws referendums were approved to present to the membership; legally, we needed to come up with some plan to fill RVC vacancies and there aren't a whole lot of acceptable options. Either one works.

3. The budget was approved as presented. This one had the primal hairs on the back of my neck standing up. The budget is an unimaginative "add 5% to the past unimaginative budget" and raise dues to do it. There is no evidence of fiscal restraint or attempt to reign in escalating costs in national office operations or general governance costs. \$35,000 was approved to hire a consultant to advise us on the optimal level of governance and the proper interaction between the various committees and staff. This is where a lack of business savvy on the part of many AMC members became apparent. I don't have a problem with giving money away to charitable groups; I do with giving money away to profit making enterprises. To think of the tens of thousands Mensans, the thousands of those who have solid business back grounds and experience, and not try to tap into that experience, was just plain foolish.

4. The motion to mandate electronic distribution of newsletters did not enjoy support but did spur good discussion on what the membership prefers and often demands. It failed but I expect that it naturally will evolve on its own over the coming years as electronic publications become more accepted in our society at large.

5. A dues increase to \$59 a year was passed (and must pass a second time at the next AMC meeting). This will be used to fuel the ever increasing cost of conducting Mensa business. You either act fiscally conservative or increase income, and your AMC is choosing to increase income.

6. The Interloc distribution scheme was approved, but honestly was one of the non issues which should not ever have to reach the AMC level for discussion. This is a management issue, not a policy issue. This is where having a smaller, more focused AMC and committees with more responsibility would prove useful.

7. Having the Mensa Foundation fund gifted children grants makes perfect financial sense, especially since we give them a \$50,000+ grant each year and pay them a hefty rent for our headquarters. This was easily approved. The down side is that Mensa relinquished control of how those grants are distributed. Nothing is free, as the saying goes.

8. Having the National Office administer the registration at Annual Gatherings was approved. The debate here was between the advantages of having national office staff do all the financial accounting with the resulting security and the further weakening of local hosting groups in managing an AG. Both positions are absolutely correct, it comes down to the ideology of whether local groups should have a free hand in AGs or whether AML should protect their interest directly. I've noticed the overall trend within Mensa is a strengthening of AML at the expense of local groups. Personally, this is not a positive trend since it is at the local group level that most Mensans interact (those that do, since most do not). Being a national gathering, I can easily envision the day when AML holds AGs wherever they choose without any cursory support from a local group. As I stated earlier, it will be the make up of future AMCs which determines where this trend goes.

The official minutes will be available soon; I only summarize these meetings to give the membership some thoughts for future consideration.
