

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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 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 submissions to:

nmmnewsletter@hotmail.com

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

ON THE COVER: Aaron Stander (L) and Jim McDermott discuss Aaron's latest book . Photo by Stan Cain.

Northern Michigan Mensa

October 2008 Calendar

BOOK CLUB - Saturday, 4 October 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

We will meet at Cottage Café, located at 420 Munson Avenue, Traverse City in the Papa's Den. The Bibliomensans book for October will be *The Nine*, by Jeffrey Toobin, to be presented by Sherry McNamara.

Crystal River Canoe/Kayak Trip - Sunday, 5 October 2007 at 2:00 p.m.

A two- to three-hour trip with 3 very short portages. On last year's trip, the salmon were running providing an interesting experience.

Note: the trip will be canceled if it is raining around noon and/or if the forecast is for rain that afternoon. No alternate date is scheduled.

Directions from Traverse City:

Take M-72 west to County Road 677 (also called Valley Road).

Turn right (north) and go to M-22.

Go THRU Glen Arbor to CR 675. Turn right (east).

Go about a mile to Fisher Rd and turn Right and park near the start point on the Crystal River.

If you have your own canoe or kayak, go directly to the starting point at 2 p.m. Or, you can rent a kayak in Glen Arbor at Crystal River Outfitters, which is on the Crystal River just east of "downtown" Glen Arbor. They provide shuttle service from there to where we will be starting. Phone them ahead of time at 231-334-4420 or visit their web site: www.crystalriveroutfitters.com. You drop off their kayak at their business place at the end of the trip.

The rest of us who do not rent equipment will continue on to where CR 675 meets M-22 and end the trip there. One vehicle left at that point will serve to shuttle people back to their cars. You can contact Jack Schultz (phone 231-275-6735 or email at nwoodpc@chartermi.net) for further details.

BRUNCH - Saturday, 11 October 2008 at 11:00 a.m.

We will meet at Cottage Café, located at 420 Munson Avenue, Traverse City in the Papa's Den.

TGIF - Friday, 24 October 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 upstairs.

Member News

Happy October Birthday

8	D A Bean	18	Patricia Lynne Paternel
9	Ruth Minshull	27	Karen Kennedy
15	Jessica Mary Sullivan	27	Elissa J Laskey
17	Thomas MacNeill Barnhart	29	Mark Alford Jr
		31	Susan D Nolf

Mensa Membership Milestones

(Years of continuous Membership)

10 Years Gary L McWhirter

Welcome Back to Northern Michigan Mensa

Roland W Schalow Jr Mark Alford Jr

2008 Statistics	AML	NMM
Total membership	50928	98
New and reinstating membership	557	3
Offers of membership	358	0
New members since April 2008	1489	5
Reinstating members since April 2008	1548	2
Members leaving group		1

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 8/31/2008. 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 any of you who were there know, I was truly pleased to see such a fine turnout for Aaron Stander's talk with us at our September brunch. By my count, 28 of us listened to him share the good, bad, and the ugly about what it is to be a published writer. We wish him well in whatever he decides about where or who will publish his third mystery that is set here in northwestern Lower Michigan. But, we wish he'd hurry up and get it done so we can read it!

Judy and Gary Cools drove all the way from Ludington to join us at the brunch and it was good to see them after a long hiatus. Ruth Minshull and her friend, Ed, came from Northport, Lavon Jonson and Melissa Rennie came from the Bear Lake/Arcadia area, Erik Snyder drove from Gaylord, and ever-faithful Dwayne Bean brought his mother, wife, and two children from their home between Charlevoix and East Jordan. Those from Elk Rapids, Traverse City, and towns close by included Penny Novarro, Pete Turkus, Margaret Scott, Bobbi Walker, Bernard and Mary Lee Hanchett, Stan and Dorothy Cain and Dorothy's cousin, Pat Prasad; Judith Lindenau (whom we were glad to see after her long and arduous hip replacement ordeal), Jim McDermott, Richard Hopfner and, of course, our guests – Aaron and Mary Kay Stander, as well as Joanne and me.

If this program grabbed you, I thoroughly encourage you to put Saturday, November 8 on your calendar for another one which may be similar...but different. Writer and college professor Jeffrey Vande Zande will be joining us from Delta College (Midland-Bay City area) to talk about his writing experiences as well as a new venture he has made into movie script writing (along with an example of a 12-minute movie based on one of his scripts).

I do thank all who came to Aaron's talk. It was the best turnout we've had for a Mensa event in a very long while.

PETOSKEY GROUP CONTINUES ITS ACTIVITY

Jennifer LaPoint keeps scheduling opportunities for Mensans north and east of the Traverse City area to get together. A nature hike on the campus of North Central Michigan College in Petoskey was scheduled for Saturday, September 27 and we look forward to a report about it.

GRAB THOSE PADDLES!

Don't forget about our now-almost-annual fall canoe/kayak outing on Sunday, October 5. If you like the feel (or would like to experience it) of big salmon bumping your canoe or kayak, you'll not want to miss the chance for it to

happen on that afternoon. If you don't have a canoe or kayak, you can rent one from the outfitter right on the Crystal River just on the east end of downtown Glen Arbor. We'll meet at 2 p.m. About two miles east of Glen Arbor where Fisher Road crosses the Crystal River. Fall colors should be lovely on that date.

MENSA TESTING DAY

Saturday, October 11 is the date on which we'll be holding a special testing session in Traverse City for those who want to see if they qualify. Mensa Testing Day (MTD) this year is actually the following Saturday but neither Sue Styles nor I can make it that date, so we're holding the session a week earlier. Mensa recognizes any testing held during October and through November 2 as "counting" toward the event. New memberships which result from testing on MTD each year account for nearly half of the growth that occurs nationally in Mensa. If you know of anyone who might be thinking (or should be) about whether or not he or she qualifies for Mensa, please encourage those folks to contact me ASAP so pre-registration can be done. The room we use at the Traverse Area Association of Realtors can accommodate no more than 14 people at one testing session, so early registration will ensure a spot. We do, however, accept walk-ins if there is still space available. Onsite registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. on the 11th and the testing will begin close to 10 o'clock.



SRO!

The crowd at the September brunch listens while Aaron Stander talks about publishing in general and his latest book, *Deer Season*, in particular. Photo by Stan Cain.

SANITY

By Ruth Minshull

We continually hear about the many forms of insanity and aberration. We toss the descriptive phrases around as if we'd learned them in kindergarten: paranoia, OCD, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, Type A, B and AB behavior. And, of course, there's a phobia to match half the words, objects, varmints and moon beams on the planet—and we don't do them proudly. It's enough to make you wonder if anyone is truly sane.

What is the opposite of loony? Have the shrinks ever taken time out from cataloging our derangements to study and define sanity? One dictionary asserts that sanity is “*the lack of insanity.*” Another was equally bereft of facts: “*the quality or condition of being sane.*”

The question is: would we recognize sanity if we saw it? How can we strive for it if we don't even know what it is? Well, I think one person has recognized and defined the ultimate sanity. While he doesn't call it that, he describes in detail the characteristics of people who are stronger, smarter and more skillful at handling life's difficulties.

If asked “What do you really want?” we might want a jazzy sports car, to start a rock band, to run away and join the circus, to hit a home run out of Yankee Stadium, to star in our own reality show or be as thin as Calista Flockhart. But senior to all other desires, the strongest motivation of every life form (from amoebae to parsnips) is simply to survive. It's so basic, so tacitly understood, that most of us wouldn't even enter it on our want list.

Yet, survival isn't something we should take for granted. Some are better at it than others. Two people might be exposed to the same devastating experience. One may endure it and emerge with a positive outlook, having benefited from the challenge. Another might die or, years later, be still crouching in the corner mewling, “Why me?”

The Survivor Personality by Al Siebert, PhD was published in 1993. As a psychologist, Dr. Siebert spent over 40 years studying people who were survivors of torture, accidents, life-threatening illness, losses, disasters, prison camps, plane crashes and more. In every case they had overcome traumatic situations by their own personal efforts and emerged with newly discovered strengths and abilities. Afterward these people realized that the experience had been valuable to them. The book is a compilation of their stories and the characteristics these remarkable people have in common. More than anything, *The Survivor Personality* is a guidebook, a study in sanity. What could be more sane than surviving against great odds?

Of course, a goat may be satisfied with just surviving, but we want more than that; we want to thrive. We want some laughs, some thrills, some

challenging work, some triumphs, some warm-hearted companionship, some stuff.

Dr. Siebert's book is not just a manual on how to cope if your plane has to make an emergency landing in the middle of the Amazon forest. It's a guide to living a good life in general. At some time, most of us are faced with emergencies, setbacks and disappointments. The important thing is that we don't give up. We take a deep breath and look for solutions. It also helps to know the characteristics we need in order to be more resilient when we encounter reversals—major or minor. Dr. Siebert says that the qualities of the survivor can be learned, but they cannot be taught—an intriguing distinction.

So, in the midst of all the fruitcakes, wackos and ding-a-lings around us on this planetary funny farm, we find a few exceptionally sane individuals who have undergone extreme tests of courage and endurance to emerge as level-headed, capable individuals—exemplary people. The Survivors.

Primarily, such people are flexible and resilient; they can adapt to a situation. They're well-adjusted, have a sense of humor and enjoy life. They are not the drama queens who squeeze every gasp of histrionics out of a situation rather than facing reality and finding solutions.

Some lazy writers like to pigeonhole people: the baby boomers, hippies, yuppies, the “me” generation, the “now” generation, Generation X, Generation Y (or Millennials or ‘Echo Boomers’) and now Generation Z—as if we are born in pre-programmed clumps every ten years.

Survivors defy such simplistic classifications. They may be strong yet gentle, mature but playful, humorous and serious, extroverted and introverted, proud and humble, creative and logical, etc. They are not likely to be hard-core conservatives or bleeding-heart liberals. While they may vote for a certain party, it's likely that they will share many viewpoints with the other side. They are neither too dependent nor too independent. Labels don't describe them. They're not comfortable with a magazine quiz that queries: Are you a pessimist or an optimist? Are you critical or non-judgmental? Are you confident or self-doubting? Where most dichotomies are concerned, survivors may be either, or both or neither—at any given time. They're flexible.

“Ugh! I would never do that—no matter what!” My friend, Julie, was emphatic. I had just told her about World War II POWs who ate food containing maggots and weevils in order to survive. Some of those POWs died because they refused to eat.

Now, maggots and weevils are definitely not my idea of haute cuisine. And if the queen should drop in for dinner some evening, I'm not going to offer her an appetizer of creepy crawly things (even if she begs).

But if it comes down to raw survival, I won't say, “never.” I think I would opt to survive. In my mind, it sure beats the alternative.

An Early Christmas Present?

By Susannah Leath

[Reprinted from "Men-Tul Notes", newsletter of Eastern Oklahoma Mensa, February 1997; Carol MacKechnie, Editor]

I attended my first Mensa meeting tonight – the 1996 Christmas Party! It is 1:40 a.m. Sunday and I am so excited I cannot sleep! Wow! I met people like me, with multiple interests, who are open minded, excited by life – who are willing to exchange bear hugs at a moment's notice! People who can support me, people I can support, people who know lots of other people, who have lots of friends, who do lots of things!! This is what I have been looking for!

Avid bicyclists often only bicycle, avid Toastmasters usually only toastmaster, avid folk dancers mostly folk dance, computer people become single-mindedly immersed in computers, and so on, but I do many things, and many things at once and so do Mensans!

In one evening I talked with other people about dreams, traveling to Singapore, Europe, and Egypt, about A.D.D., dyslexia, going to school, failing classes, changing professions, Scotland, genealogy, Renaissance groups, men in kilts, "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus", improvisation, playing games, Latin quotes, allergies, asthma, dragons, the internet, E-mail, cats, dogs, sick pets, Paris, Amsterdam and Spain, favorite museums and art periods, unprotected statues, ignorant tourists, different kinds of food, sequins (what constitutes a well made or poorly made sequin dress), jokes, puns, and spoonerisms – we sang an excerpt from the Rocky Horror show, discussed the fact that the German language has a neutral gender, different dialects, foreign languages, which countries like Americans, driving in Italy and over the Alps, being passed on the Autobahn while going 120 mph yourself, trying to get work, choosing career paths, Italian ancestry, jet lag (unanimous that it is worse going east than west), that there is more gold in the Vatican (mostly decorating it) than in Fort Knox, the accessibility of the Coliseum, the Pieta, and finally, how Mensans can act any way they want and people do not think they are stupid, because one must be smart to be a member at all.

Some Mensans are poor mathematicians (like myself), and they don't mind when I can't recall a name that I know I should know well. They have terrific patience with me and are very interested and relaxed at the same time. Some were very intense and talkative like me, and often did not finish their sentences either. Everyone I sat next to talked to me, and they asked me to come back. I really hope I qualify soon. This has been some night! Maybe now I can get to sleep.

(Note: The following Saturday I received my letter of congratulations from American Mensa!).

And a few more puns...

It is said that the ability to make and understand PUNS is the highest level of language development. Here are some of the top 10 winners in the International Pun Contest.

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal? His goal: transcendental medication.

A woman has twins and gives them up for adoption. One of them goes to a family in Egypt and is named Ahmal. The other goes to a family in Spain; they name him Juan. Years later, Juan sends a picture of himself to his birth mother. Upon receiving the picture, she tells her husband that she wishes she also had a picture of Ahmal. Her husband responds, 'They're twins! If you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmal.'

A group of friars were behind on their belfry payments, so they opened a small florist shop to raise funds. Since everyone liked to buy flowers from the men of God, a rival florist across town thought the competition was unfair. He asked the good fathers to close down, but they would not. He went back and begged the friars to close. They ignored him. So, the rival florist hired Hugh MacTaggart, the roughest and most vicious thug in town to 'persuade' them to close. Hugh beat up the friars and trashed their store, saying he'd be back if they didn't close up shop. Terrified, they did so, thereby proving that only Hugh can prevent florist friars.

And, finally, there was the person who sent ten different puns to friends, with the hope that at least one of the puns would make them laugh. No pun in ten did.
