

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 8 Number 1

October 2009

 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

US mail:

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Stan Cain
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Traverse City MI 49686

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

ON THE COVER: September saw the arrival of a number of tall ships in West Bay. Here, the Appledore V from Bay City sails past the Clinch Park Marina. Photo by Stan Cain.

Northern Michigan Mensa

October 2009 Calendar

BOOK CLUB - Saturday, 3 October 2009 at 11:00 a.m.

We will meet at the Cottage Café, located at 420 Munson Avenue, Traverse City, in the Papa's Den. The Bibliomensans book for October will be **The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl** by Timothy Egan. The presenter will be Stan Cain. Please plan to attend for another lively discussion! Note: See the book description on page 4.

BRUNCH - Saturday, 10 October 2009 at 11:00 a.m.

We will meet at the 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.

MENSA TESTING DAY - Saturday, 17 October 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

We'll be offering the Mensa Admissions Tests at the Traverse Area Association of Realtors office at 852 S. Garfield Avenue in Traverse City. Space is limited, so prior registration is recommended. If you know of people who are at least 14 years old who might want to be tested, have them contact Jack Schultz at 231-275-6735 to sign up.

CANOE AND KAYAK TRIP - Sunday, 18 October 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Join us on the **Crystal River** near Glen Arbor in Leelanau County for a couple of hours to enjoy fall colors and perhaps see some big salmon on their spawning run. We'll meet at the parking area where County Road 675 and Westman Road cross, east of Highway M-22 on the north side of Glen Arbor. You'll need to bring your own canoe or kayak unless you can find an outfitter that is still renting equipment.

TGIF - Friday, 23 October 2009 at 5:30 p.m.

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

HALLOWEEN PARTY AND GAMES NIGHT - Friday, 30 October 2009 at 7:00 p.m.

Come display your Halloween finery (or not) at the home of Jack and Joanne Schultz. Bob for apples, play games, eat, drink, and be merry with your fellow Mensans. This will be a potluck snack-type gathering, not a supper, so bring your favorite snacks and what you'd like to drink. The Schultzes live at 8846 Green Briar Road, which is about 4 miles northwest of the village of Lake Ann, in Benzie County. Cedar Run Road dead-ends on Green Briar Road and the Schultz home is about 750 feet south of that junction. Use Google Maps, Map Quest, or phone Jack for directions: 231-275-6735.

Member News

Happy October Birthday

8	D A Bean	18	Patricia Lynne Paternel
9	Ruth Minshull	27	Karen Kennedy
17	Thomas MacNeill Barnhart		

Mensa Membership Milestones

(Years of continuous Membership)

11 Years Gary L McWhirter

August 2009 Statistics

	AML	NMM
Total membership	51 787	93
New and reinstating membership	673	1
Offers of membership	325	3
New members since April 2009	1955	4
Reinstating members since April 2009	1618	5

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 8/31/2009. 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, Local Secretary

Many issues have cropped up among American Mensa's Local Secretaries during the past month and I'd like to share some of them with you.

First off, Mensa's accountants and lawyers have determined (some time ago) that the relationship between the national organization and the local groups needs codification that will satisfy IRS and other entities. As it is for a majority of local groups, our finances are tied directly to the national office, which does all the required filing with federal and state authorities at tax time. Hence, it is thought that a "charter" between the national group and each of the local groups needs to be implemented. The American Mensa Committee appointed the national communications officer to develop such a "model" charter...and that's been the rub. One clause in the charter says that if the local group doesn't accept it as presented, it has 30 days to do so or else the national organization can/will withdraw recognition of the local group. Now, that sounds pretty "authoritarian" and undemocratic in an organization which prides itself on a certain degree of autonomy for local groups. (I guess this is why some groups have incorporated separately and handle most of their own affairs outside of American Mensa...even though they continue to receive funding from the national office for their members.)

The American Mensa Committee will bring the proposed charter(s) up for consideration at its quarterly meeting this month, but local secretaries have been very vocal about objecting to many aspects of how this has been handled as well as in the wording of some elements of the charters. We'll have to see just whether or not a delay in adopting this occurs. If so, I'll keep you informed...or else your new local secretary will do so after new officers are elected during December. Speaking of which....

NMM Elections Ahead

Our NMM nominating committee, under the chairmanship of Pete Turkus, is deliberating about whom to present to our membership as candidates for election. I would encourage anyone who is contacted by the committee this month to think seriously about accepting a nomination. And, if you're interested in the future of Northern Michigan Mensa and wish to serve on the Executive Committee – whether as a voting member or as an appointed officer – please let Pete know so he can either put you on the ballot (for one of the five elected positions) or

at least let whoever is elected know of your interest in serving as an officer.

We've had a group of loyal and hard-working officers during this past two-year period (as we had in years before that), so my hope is that another good slate of people is put forward. Contact Pete by email at petencheri@chartermi.net, or phone him at 231-941-8321 before October 15. That's the date by which the NomComm must present its slate of nominees to our newsletter editor for publication in the November issue of Borealis.

Fall in Northern Michigan

We hope to see some of you on the Crystal River this month, on Sunday, October 18, at 2 p.m. Leaves – and perhaps some salmon – should be colorful and make for an enjoyable outing. It's been awhile since we've had a Halloween Party, so let's see some of you come out in your goblin finery on Friday the 30th. We'll have some games and bobbing for apples...at Joanne's and my home 12 miles west of Traverse City. It'll be a semi-potluck, which means...no supper but plenty of snacks which we ask you all to bring at 7 p.m. See you then!

THE WORST HARD TIME: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE GREAT AMERICAN DUST BOWL

October Book Club Selection

By Timothy Egan, 353 pages

The dust storms that terrorized America's High Plains in the darkest years of the Depression were like nothing ever seen before or since, and the stories of the people that held on have never been fully told. Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times journalist and author Timothy Egan follows a half-dozen families and their communities through the rise and fall of the region, going from sod huts to new framed houses to huddling in basements with the windows sealed by damp sheets in a futile effort to keep the dust out.



September Brunch

We had a good crowd at the September brunch. The event included an interesting talk by Record-Eagle columnist Dee Blair and an appearance by Barney Du Little (Bernard Hanchett) and Igor, right.

Above, clockwise from left; Joanne Schultz, Dee Blair, Priscilla Walmsley, Dwayne Bean, Jim McDermott, Melissa Rennie, Pete Turkus, Joan Dasef, Cheryl Turkus, Bobbi Walker, Margaret Scott, Heather Gruenberg, Dorothy Cain, Stan Cain and Penny Novarro.

Right, Dee Blair's charming Traverse City Garden.

Photos by Jack Schultz and Stan Cain.



reMark

By Betsy Yvonne Mark, RVC3

Calling all questions! The AMC now has a FAQ document on its web site and wants to include your questions about the AMC and its functioning, the whys and how comes, and provide the answers. Please send your questions to me and I'll forward them on for answers and inclusion.

I'm still traveling and dining! I had dinner with Maumee Valley Mensans again in August (so close to home that it just might become a regular thing for me). I attended East Central Ohio Mensa's picnic on August 22nd and Mid-Michigan Mensa's 35th anniversary celebration picnic on August 23rd. On August 26th, 54 Mensans from Southeast Michigan Mensa, Mid-Michigan Mensa and Maumee Valley Mensa met for dinner at a Chinese buffet, in Howell, MI, at an event we affectionately call "Meet in the Middle" because it is! On August 29th I saw many Ms at a birthday party in Cincinnati, too. My introvert is slowly becoming an extrovert. Thank you all for making me feel so welcome.

Between writing these paragraphs, I am packing for another trip to Rochester, NY. I might have visited Cleveland Area Mensa on September 24th (that's what we get for information delay in this instant world). I've been invited to speak at a monthly gathering of Kentuckiana Mensa and will do that on my way to or from Florida this winter. Visits to Bluegrass Mensa and Vandalia Mensa will be planned soon, too.

In fulfillment of my longstanding commitment to S.I.G.H.T., I was able to play hostess on two different occasions to Region 3 Ms traveling to Ypsilanti; call if you need a place to stay - I might be able to help.

I will be attending the AMC meeting October 23-25 in Arlington, TX. The agenda for that meeting should be on the Inside AML web site in mid-September. Let me know if you have concerns.

LLAP and Peace,
Betsy

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Yahoo group - <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AMR3/>
Facebook group -
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=71515809887>

“IT’S ON THE TIP OF MY TONGUE”

By Margaret J. Scott

I have said the phrase often lately. How frustrating! Someone asks me something and I can’t think of it, but I know it’s right there, so I say, “It’s on the tip of my tongue.” After a while, it will come to me, but sometimes not for hours. My aunt, at age 97, when asked how she had such a good memory, said, “I think of it all being in there on a wheel that goes around. Just keep thinking about it and as the wheel comes around you finally pick off the right word. Sometimes the wheel is pretty slow.”

Often my frustration is triggered when I see someone I feel I should know, but can’t think of the person’s name. Not so long ago I sat in a waiting room with a woman I thought looked familiar. I couldn’t think who she was or where I knew her from for the life of me. While I was waiting in another room and continuing to think about her, I decided she was a woman I had known for years—she had lived in the same subdivision as I, we had even worked together for a while, and after that, I had occasion to be in touch with her in her new job. How embarrassing it was. But, she didn’t know me either and she had to ask someone who I was; when she came out, she was embarrassed too. So, I guess it’s an age thing.

I am sensitive to forgetfulness and always prided myself for my memory and didn’t ever forget a thing. Probably I am more sensitive than I might be because my sister died from Alzheimer’s disease and I saw what that disease did to her. As the disease progressed, her memory faded until procedural memory was affected and she did not know how to do basic things or even eat anymore. So now I wonder: Is everything that went into my brain still there? Nobody knows the answer. Many researchers believe it’s all there. But then I think of the needless trivia I do remember: telephone numbers of clients from 35 years ago; names of restaurants I went to when I was traveling; just some things that don’t

matter. Maybe it is like storage on your computer that you can retrieve and then re-save; maybe it writes over other items stored there.

We accept changes to our body over the years, so why not the brain. In doing some research on memory, I learned that memory specialists have found we cannot accept the fact that our brains may slow down, and that forgetfulness is the top health concern among baby boomers. There are millions of us complaining about forgetfulness. Well, the good news is that this is normal. At an older age, the ability to hold onto new information is not as good as it used to be. Of course, we still store and use the information.

Our brain is a 3-pound miracle full of signals that make memories. With time, the signals weaken. Brains shrink a little each year after age 30 (as much as one-half a percent each year). We usually don’t notice any change for many years. Episodic memory, which covers experience (I’ve lost my glasses, where did I put them or I’ve lost my keys), relies on the frontal lobes of the brain—the area that starts shrinking first. It takes longer to pop up making us sit and think about it for a while. In normal aging, what we lose is not memory in general, but a specific kind of memory. We have a semantic memory that covers facts: What are eyeglasses? What is a movie? And the third is procedural memory, which is how to walk, how to tie your shoes, how to eat, etc. This is our strongest memory, which we use unconsciously. Alzheimer’s eventually affects the procedural memory and the person may forget how to eat or even how to swallow.

As a result of items in the memory studies, I try to stimulate my brain every day as some suggest. I do crossword puzzles, Sudoku puzzles and play games each day. For years I have played the association game if I am trying very hard to remember someone’s name. A rhyme or a funny word you can associate with the name really helps. A man named Julius used to come to my office and he would flirt with every girl there. My word association for him was “juicy jowls” Julius and I never forgot his name. (In fact, I had too much fun with it!) Also, getting organized (writing things down, or always putting things in the same place), and concentrating more, make us more comfortable, as we don’t seem to forget as much if we pay attention to what we are doing.

Oh, in response to my favorite phrase, I also learned that the phrase “It’s on the tip of my tongue” is so universal that it is used in more than 30 languages!