

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



Volume 12 Number 9

June 2014

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.

Advertising:

Borealis accepts only short, "classified"-type advertisements from individual members. Notices should be of a non-commercial nature and include contact information.

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.

Email submissions to:

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Northern Michigan Mensa

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ON THE COVER: Two hikers stroll down the trail at the Treat Farm during our May wildflower hike. Photo by Stan Cain.

June Calendar

BOOK CLUB - Saturday, June 7, 2014 at 11:00 a.m.

We will meet at BC Pizza, 3186 Lafranier, Traverse City. This is near the corner of S. Airport Road. The June book club selection will be: **The Goldfinch** by Donna Tartt and presented by Sherry McNamara. You may join us even if you haven't read the book.

Brunch - Saturday, June 14, 2014 at 10:30 a.m.

We will meet at the Bay Town Kitchen (formerly the Cottage Café), 420 Munson Ave. Traverse City.

Dining Out - Wednesday, Jun 18, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.

Our restaurant of choice this month is Minerva's, inside the Park Place Hotel on State Street. You can get everything from salads to burgers to steaks. The food is good and reasonably priced. First one there grab a table in the back room - it's semi-private there so we can chat.

Member News

Happy June Birthday

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 4 Bartholomew G Halliday III | 23 Sherry L Saites |
| 23 William E. Hagan | 29 Bernard Hanchett |

Mensa Membership Milestones

(Years of Continuous Membership)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 12 Corinne Kass-Hillard Mowrey | 4 Patrick Sullivan |
| 11 Stan Cain | |

Members New/Reinstated to Our Group - Welcome!

Rosemary Hawley

<u>April 2014 Statistics</u>	<u>AML</u>	<u>NMM</u>
Total membership	47,203	86
New and reinstating membership	672	1
Offers of membership	249	0
New members since April 2014	290	19
Reinstating members since April 2014	332	29

Membership directory information is based on data from American Mensa records as of 4/30/2014. If you would like to change the privacy releases on file, use www.us.mensa.org and click on "Member Login". Then click on "Profile Update" and "PDQ Update"

Judith J. Lindenau May 22, 1941 – May 13, 2014

Another of our active members has passed away. Judith was a contributor to Borealis and had often served as Publicity Chair for our group. Judith had been a member since 2005.

After receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts in history and American Literature, she taught at the University of South Dakota and then Interlochen Arts Academy teaching music and creative writing.

Judith was a very accomplished person and was active in real estate, performance music, writing short stories and poetry and personal consulting and coaching. She will be missed by many.

(Note: An article written by Judith in 2007 appears on page 4.)

Help Wanted !

There are currently several vacancies in leadership positions within NMM. While all are important, that of **Scholarship Chair** will need to be filled soon in order to be ready to organize next year's scholarships. Contact Jack Schultz at 231 640 4569. Note: Newcomers to our group, this is a great opportunity to become more involved and provide a needed service within the organization.

Volunteers are needed to fill the following positions:

- Petoskey Area Subgroup Coordinator**
- Publicity Chair**
- Scholarship Chair**
- Web Contact**

Please contact LocSec, Stan Cain, at nmm_borealis@yahoo.com if you would like to join us in managing your organization

News from the RVC3

It's the fourth quarter of my term already, and the time has flown. My annual report was filed to be published in a future Bulletin. Highlights as follows:

Region 3 once again had great scholarship program participation in terms of both student applications received and volunteer hours served. We have a good number of RGs planned for the year. Local groups are sharing calendars and it is getting harder to remember what local group your new friend is from. By the time this is printed, our new Region 3 Mensa tablecloth will have traveled to one science fair, one RG and one Sci-Fi convention. And, the Region 3 event webpage was updated recently.

The 2014 AG in Boston is just around the corner and we are already looking forward to hosting the 2015 AG in Region 3 to be held in Louisville, KY. As Program Chair for that committee, I welcome suggestions and requests; it is my wish that every time slot provides a dilemma in which program to attend. It is still too early to schedule speakers, but not too early to explore interests and leads.

Look for more details in the Bulletin for upcoming RGs.

Columbus Area Mensa -- Columbus, OH
Ohio: A Capital Idea
Aug. 1-3, 2014

Western PA Mensa -- Pittsburgh, PA
Rube GoldbeRG: the Deliberately Over-Engineered RG
August 29-September 1, 2014

And, if you have not attended your local group in awhile, check out that calendar or volunteer to host something new. A new friend is just an old friend that you haven't known long enough; you may collect a few at the next event you attend.

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Editor's Note: The following article was written by Judith Lindenau on her return from a trip to Georgia to help them set up a framework to organize real estate transactions in that country. Published originally in the July 2007, NMM Borealis.

Georgia on my mind... By Judith Lindenau - June, 2007

Well, that's the wrong Georgia, actually. The Georgia that's on my mind these days is the Republic of Georgia, a Eurasian country in the Caucasus at the east coast of the Black Sea. It is bordered on the north by Russia, on the south by Turkey and Armenia, and on the east by Azerbaijan.



Figure 1 Map of Georgia (Lonely Planet Map)

The territory of modern-day Georgia has been continuously inhabited since the early Stone Age. Georgia was Christianized in the early 3rd century and unified into a single monarchy in 1008 and then experienced periods of revival and decline until being fragmentized into several smaller political entities in the 16th century. Imperial Russia acquired Georgian lands in a piecemeal fashion from 1801 to 1866. Independent again in 1991, after a period of chaos of civil war and severe economic crisis, Georgia stabilized by the late 1990s. The bloodless Rose Revolution of 2003 installed a new, pro-Western reformist government, whose aspirations to join NATO and attempts at bringing the

secessionist territories back under Georgia's control has resulted in a deterioration of the relations with Russia. Currently, the government is also working toward joining the European Union.

There's the background. I recently returned from a ten-day trip to Tbilisi, the Georgian capital—my second visit in two years. My reason for going is my work with a non-profit organization, the International Real Property Foundation, which has as its mission to help emerging economies build their real estate infrastructure through formation of organizations which can lobby for reform and educate the practitioner members.

As in most of the Eastern European nations, the Georgian people had no idea how to manage their real estate economy. When property became privatized, there were no mechanisms to assess value, hold title, transfer title, or borrow money for purchases. The entire system had to be built from 'scratch', and it is still a work in progress. One of my most interesting real estate moments in Tbilisi was visiting the open air market and park: on certain days, properties which are for sale are posted on the trees in the park. Purchasers wander through the forest, looking at descriptions and photos, and make arrangements to view the dwelling. I might add that not all properties are actively for sale: the person standing by the tree may have heard a cousin or other relative observe that MAYBE they'd like a larger place, and so the enterprising salesman simply posted the property description and figured negotiations could take place whenever an interested buyer surfaced.

Of course, there are no licensing or competency requirements to sell property, or to appraise it. The government in Georgia (and most of the other countries I've mentioned) does not see itself in the licensing business for occupations—that's not a 'democratic' function in their view.

All the more reason to form a professional association, of course. Educational and practical requirements can be enforced, and the public will have some tool for evaluating the competence of the practitioners, be they appraisers or brokers and salespeople. But forming organizations is not a skill that comes easily to people who remember life under Socialism. Americans belong to clubs as a way of life, but Georgians don't understand concepts like bylaws and elections and dues. That's where my experience as an association manager comes into play, and is a large part of what my activities were in Tbilisi this May.



Figure 2 Tbilisi

This second visit was limited to working within the city limits of the capital of the country, an urban setting of close to two million people. Snow capped mountains border the city, yet the weather along the river plain that is the city center is almost subtropical. The population is quite diverse: Russians, Armenians, Turks, Jews, Germans all live together in relative harmony, it seems—according to the newspapers I read, living harmoniously with diversity is a very strong imperative. Education and the arts are also a very real part of every Georgian's life, and the literacy rate in the country is an enviable 100%.

ყველა ადამიანი იზადება თავისუფალი და თანასწორი თავისი ღირსებითა და უფლებებით. მათ მინიჭებული აქვთ გონება და სინდისი და ერთმანეთის მიმართ უნდა იქცეოდნენ მშობის სულსკვეთებით.

Figure 3 (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." This is a sample of the Georgian language using the Mkhedruli alphabet, which is based on an earlier alphabet from the 11th century.

The snapshots that remain in my mind are of a hot, humid city teeming with a diversity of people. Most are casually dressed in jeans (never shorts) or Western style business clothes. Most interesting is the traffic as I watch it from my hotel window or try to survive it in the back seat of a car or taxi. As my driver explained, there's really only one rule of driving in Georgia: if

there's no car there, you can go there. This means that two-way traffic is not limited to one side of the street, and large paved intersections are a free-for-all. There are relatively few traffic lights or stop signs, and those that are in evidence are meant to be a way for Georgian drivers to challenge authority. Parking seems to fall under the same rule: park where there's a space – and if that includes the sidewalk, well – too bad for the pedestrians.



Figure 4 Not my photo, but this is Tbilisi traffic!

Georgian food is wonderful. I especially like Georgian cheese, salty and flavorful, and the Georgian answer to pizza, Katchapuri or cheese bread. Katchapuri comes in many shapes and sizes: my favorite is the boat shape with egg. Unfortunately, the Marriott hotel where I stayed thought it should serve Italian food, of all things, and so finding good Georgian food on this trip was difficult.



Figure 5 Katchapuri

Tbilisi has been undergoing a rampage of uncontrolled building during the last few years – skyscrapers, large office buildings, and apartment complexes. The economy is rapidly growing, due to the strategic location of Georgia on major trade and oil routes, as well as a growing awareness of its attractiveness for tourism. Of course as more and more growth and construction occurs, so to grows the need for better tools for transfer of property and for protection of the landowner's investments. One trip won't be enough for me to accomplish my job of enabling a viable professional community: I am eagerly anticipating my return.
