



Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa

Calendar

APRIL

Book Club - Saturday, 2 April 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

The April Book Club selection will be *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, presented by Heather Gruenberg-Seger. The group meets at BC Pizza, 3186 LaFranier Road, in Traverse City.

Brunch - Saturday, 9 April 2016 at 10:30 a.m.

The April brunch will be held at the MI Grille, located at 420 Munson in Traverse City. We will meet in the back dining room.

Lambing Barn Opportunity - Saturday, 16 April 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

The event will be at "Back Acre Farm", located at 12266 Cherry Ave., Rapid City. Northern Michigan Mensans and their families are invited to Brett Pharo's sheep farm for an experience that will, hopefully, be entertaining and educational. This will be during the heart of lambing (birthing) season, with several ewes giving birth each day. Directions from Traverse City: Go north on US 31 to Elk Rapids. At the stoplight just after the bridge, turn right onto Ames St. Continue on that road, which will become Cairn Hwy, throughout Kewadin, where the road will become Cherry Ave. The farm is six miles past Kewadin on the right. Look for the "Back Acre Farm" sign out front. Any questions, please call **Brett Pharo 231-564-1540**

MAY

Wildflower Hike - Date TBD.

Come join forester Jack Schultz as he talks about Michigan wildflowers. We will pick a date in early to mid May to see the Spring wildflowers at their best.

Brunch - Saturday, 14 May 2016 at 10:30 a.m.

The May brunch will be held at the MI Grille, located at 420 Munson in Traverse City. We will meet in the back dining room.

Northern Michigan Mensa

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

Email submissions to:

Stan Cain

nmmborealis@yahoo.com

Executive Committee

VOTING MEMBERS

Local Secretary	Bobbi Walker	231-486-6114	bobbiraw@att.net
Deputy Loc Sec	KC Mowrey	231-775-8785	kcmowrey@charter.net
Treasurer	Susan A. Styles	231-357-5233	seas@umich.edu
At Large	Brett Pharo	231- 322-2017	brettpharo@gmail.com
At Large	Carole Eberly	989-421-5086	cmeberly@yahoo.com

APPOINTED MEMBERS

Newsletter Editor	Stan Cain	231-938-1506	nmmborealis@yahoo.com
Financial Overseer	Richard Thibeau	231-590-2052	rthibeau@coslink.net
Membership	Vacant		
Ombudsman	Pete Turkus	231-941-8321	petencheri@chartermi.net
Program Chair	Vacant		
Publicity Chair	Carole Eberly	989-421-5086	cmeberly@yahoo.com
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SIGHT Coordinator	Melissa J. Rennie	231-889-0892	renmeij@yahoo.com
Testing Coordinator	John D. Schultz	231-275-6735	jsvoyageur@gmail.com
Web Contact	Vacant		

OTHER MEMBERS

Proctor	Susan A. Styles	231-357-5233	seas@umich.edu
Regional Vice-Chair	Julia Ashley	614.448.6023	RVC3@us.mensa.org

The Greek Coin

By Ruth Minshull

I look at the ancient Greek coin my son gave me for my birthday some years ago, and I wonder where it's been. How many hands has it passed through in the 1600 years since its creation?

The coin is unusual, my son says, because of the owl on its reverse side. The obverse carries the more traditional head usually seen on the early Greek and Roman coins. The crown of laurel leaves suggests that it depicts a leader.

Perhaps it is the head of Alaric, king of the Visigoths, who invaded Greece in A.D. 396. Or, if the coin was already in existence, it may have been part of the plunder appropriated by Alaric's men. He himself may have carried it. Perhaps he used it to buy a fine piece of jewelry for his mistress.

Possibly the coin traveled to Rome where it paid the wages of a workman building the Basilica of St. Maria Maggiore.

Undoubtedly it has seen many turbulent times, since most of what people seemed to do in those days was build cathedrals and invade countries--grabbing territories which they passed back and forth among themselves.

Except for the religious structures, not much art survives from those early centuries. I suppose with all that saber rattling and rock hauling there was little time left for creative niceties.

The coin bears no date, and its shape is somewhat irregular because it was handmade. Still, it's appealing in the way of an imperfect work of art. This makes my coin even more meaningful to me. It is one creation that remains from that ancient culture.

I consider it a lucky piece. It has certainly remained relatively unharmed itself through the many centuries of conflict and strife. The only mar on its surface is a small round spot on the reverse where a plug was removed about 1500 years ago, to test for the coin's authenticity as silver. (Obviously counterfeiting perps were at work even then.)

Anyway, here is my coin, having outlived its makers and all the thousands of people who have traded it, stolen it, worked for it, cherished it, wasted it, killed for it, disdained it, hidden it, found it, lost it, bequeathed it, inherited it, slaved for it, cheated over it, donated it, won it or gambled it away.

And now, by the caprice of fate, it has found its way to me, and I wear it on a gold chain around my neck.

I am certain it is a talisman, whose magical charm will ward off harmful influences and bring me good fortune.

Cynics, I presume, would insist that good luck exists only in the mind of the believer.

Well, OK. I believe.

Long time member Ruth Minshull wrote this article before her death in June 2013. Reprinted by permission.

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Send address correction c/o
American Mensa LTD.
1229 Corporate Drive West
Arlington, TX 76006-6103

