



Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa

Northern Michigan Mensa

Borealis is published by Northern Michigan Mensa (3/496) once each month under the auspices of its Executive Committee.

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	Stan Cain	231-938-1506	nmmborealis@yahoo.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	Bernie Hanchett	231-946-5177	barneydulittle@hotmail.com
Ombudsman	Vacant		
Program Chair	Bobbi Walker	231-486-6114	bobbiraw@att.net
Publicity Chair	Bobbi Walker	231-486-6114	bobbiraw@att.net
Scholarship Chair	John D. Schultz	231-275-6735	jsvoyageur@gmail.com
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		
Proctor	Susan A. Styles	231-357-5233	seas@umich.edu



Calendar

FEBRUARY

Book Club - Saturday, 4 February 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

The February Book Club selection will be *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* by Robert Louis Stevenson and presented by Sherry McNamara. The group will meet at BC Pizza, 3186 LaFranier Road, in Traverse City where the pizza, breadsticks and conversation are always good.

Brunch – Saturday, 11 February 2017 at 11:00 a.m.

Note New Time New Place New Speaker!

This time the February brunch will be held at the Cottage Cafe, 420 Munson Avenue at 8th Street, in Traverse City. We will meet either in the separate room in the rear or in the small room to the right as you enter. Our speaker will be NMM member, Carole Eberly, who will tell us about her trip to Washington D.C. to join the Women's March on Washington which was held on January 21, 2017.

(See photos on the cover and p. 7 taken by Carole.)

COMING ON THE 1ST OF MAY !!!

It's time to sign up for that annual Trivia challenge known as **CULTURE QUEST**. As usual we are in desperate need of volunteers. You must have paid your 2017 dues and be signed up by March 31st.

Contact Bobbi Walker at bobbiraw@att.net or call 231-486-4116

Personalities and French Rap

By John Porter

(continued from last month's *Borealis*)

If one travels far enough into the rain forest west of Port Townsend, one can find their vehicle gaining 500 feet in elevation from US-101 while heading to the Sol Duc Hot Springs deep in the rain forest of Olympic National Park. It's said that your nose will sense the strong smell of sulphur which will alert you to the springs' proximity but I visited in late October with the truck windows closed.

Visitors don't actually sit in the hot springs. Rather, refrigeration is used to lower the temperature of spring water which is pumped into concrete lined pools. When I visited, the pools' water temperatures were set at 108, 102, and 94 degrees. The fourth pool was set at a rousing 54 degrees because its water didn't come from the springs. It was piped from the river

and cleaned in the process. Approaching the communal pools you will find relaxed, swimsuit-clad bathers on even the nastiest of days. On my visit there were several guests speaking Japanese when ice cold late-fall raindrops fell through 38 degree air hitting the tops of our heads. Was I the only one wondering if these drops hadn't actually turned into tiny icicles? This onslaught of icy water hitting our heads while our bodies steamed in 108 degree water resulted in many shared laughs along with many acknowledging smiles and intercultural murmuring.



However, the most startling cultural phenomenon to startle and please me was something beyond these experiences. It was listening to the radio while driving west on Highway 101 toward and past Port Angeles. As one leaves Port Townsend, it is comforting to listen to the lyric mantra "KNKX, the new 88.5; YOUR connection to jazz, blues, and NPR news". But the signal fades as you pass Sequim (pronounced Skwim) which is between the two Ports. Searching for another NPR station takes one to a stronger KNKX signal from a different tower, two dial clicks away at 88.9 on the dashboard's digital screen.

Surprisingly, and before you realize it, you're not listening to "All Things Considered" at all. Rather, you notice joyful foot stomping music reminiscent of the Cajun music found in New Orleans. It reminded me of great concerts in an old high school auditorium in Marquette featuring the French Québécois/Canadian musical phenomenon "La Bottine Souriante". Then all of a sudden NPR has returned after the twisting 101 takes you along the inner curve of one of the Olympic Mountains so that you again receive KNKX's signal. When you pass the concave curve and emerge into an open convex expanse, rhythmic voices from the CBC station reappear. This time there are repeated chants with a minimum of musicality. My musically uneducated ear prompts me to label these chants.....French rap? The same refrain, over and over again. First loud, then soft, then louder again. You hear no discernible words or progressive melody line.



You are hearing this music beamed from Canada's Vancouver Island, just across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Actually, it seems to be more rhythmic shouted mantras than it was the snappy, bright, harmonious

music you were listening to six minutes previously. Where did the La Bottine Souriante-like band go? The 20 miles of slow speeds into and out of the sharp curves that follow the shoreline of Crescent Lake provide an unpredictable cacophony of French music alternating with NPR political commentary. That is, until you get further from Port Angeles and closer to Forks, Washington and the cut off to the mineral springs, when the NPR station can't be heard at all. You adjust to this and find that you actually prefer the French music.

The return trip to Port Townsend provides the same interposing of cultural disharmony. Following the lengthy parboiling in the hot, mineral spring water, the French rap with its related melodic cousin fades into or away from KNKX's jazz and blues which has replaced NPR news this late in the day. This auditory pleasure occurs until you are almost to Sequim. By that time, you find yourself being unable to draw any French at all out of the radio. On to normal life with normal sounds, driving on sometimes straight roads back to civilization as you knew it before you began your adventure earlier in the day.

John Porter
November 9, 2016

**On the Cover and Below -
Photos from the March on Washington by Carole Eberly**



**A group of Women from the Traverse City area.
Northern Michigan Mensan Jessica Sullivan is on the right**



Borealis
Northern Michigan Mensa

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

