



Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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Borealis

Northern Michigan Mensa

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Borealis, the newsletter of Northern Michigan Mensa (Region 3, Group 496), is published under the auspices of its Executive Committee.

The newsletter contains mandatory items; the rest of the content 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. Bad jokes are allowed. Northern Michigan Mensa recognizes that the newsletter is addressed to both minors and adults; material printed will be appropriate for distribution to minors.

All matters submitted to the editor shall be subject to editing for content, style, and space limitations, except that if a person submits material with a restriction that it be published "as is or not at all." That a person has written and submitted something to the newsletter is not, in itself, sufficient reason for its publication.

Submissions are welcome! Members of Northern Michigan Mensa may send their original writing submissions to Borealis.

Please do not send the work of others unless such submissions include permission and release of copyright from the author.

Writing:

1. Writing you submit may be edited for length and clarity, but not content. This is the default editorial assumption.
2. If you don't want your work to be edited at all, you may submit it for publication "as is or not at all." It will not be edited in any way. If published, a note will indicate that it is wholly the work of the author.
3. You may also submit work that is rough and needs major editing. If you have written something but don't have time to polish and edit it, you can still submit it and, at your request, we will give it extra help.

All writing and letters may be submitted by email as an attachment or as the message body itself. Typed pages and letters can be mailed.

Photographs:

Photographs and other artwork can be submitted via email in JPEG, PNG, GIF, WEBP, or other standard formats. Flat art or photographs can also be physically mailed, but please do not send originals. Please label each piece submitted with your name and address.

Email: britajax@gmail.com

US mail:

Borealis
Heather Gruenberg-Seger
928 Kelley Street
Traverse City, MI 49686-3418

Northern Michigan Mensa Calendar

Cincinnati Area Mensa RG

December 2-4, 2022

The Cincinnati Area Mensa invites you to come to our annual Regional Gathering the first weekend of December. As usual, there'll be speakers, programs, games, tournaments, and plenty of fun.

All meals are provided as well as 24-hour snacks and drinks.

Double Tree Guest Suites Hotel, 6300 East Kemper Road, Cincinnati OH 45241. Please let us know if you plan to attend so we know how many dinners to plan for.

<https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/entries/gathering-pending-title81/>

Central Pennsylvania Mensa Solstice RG

December 16-18, 2022

Central Pennsylvania Mensa's Solstice RG is back! Join us at the Bird-in-Hand Family Inn, we'll gather in the hospitality room, enjoy around the clock snacks, & take part in the gaming room.

Hotel: Bird-In-Hand Family Inn, 2740 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bird-in-Hand, PA 17505, (717) 768-8271

<https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/entries/gathering-pending-title90/>

FIRST Lego League Challenge Qualifier

Saturday, Dec 3, 2022, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Jamrich Hall, NMU

Upper elementary school FIRST LEGO League Challenge teams will compete in robot matches and judging sessions to qualify to attend the FIRST LEGO League Challenge State Tournament.

<https://nmu.edu/events/first-lego-league-challenge-qualifier>

Longtime Borealis Editor Passes

Stanley Cain passed away on 7 November 2022 after experiencing a stroke; he was 85 years old. He grew up in Detroit and earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Wayne State University in chemical engineering. Stan had a great interest in astronomy. He was fortunate to find a job monitoring solar flares for five years while working at the Institute for Astronomy located on the peak of Haleakala on the island of Maui. When Stan retired, he and Dorothy moved to northern Michigan. At 70 years old, he noticed an article in the local newspaper about Mensa and soon took the test and qualified to become a member. The first time we met was at my home about twenty years ago for the inaugural gathering of Northern Michigan Mensa. Stan worked quietly and diligently behind the scenes as an active member since that day. He took on the roles of local secretary, program chair, publicity chair, member-at-large, and editor, often doing double and triple duty in these positions. In March 2006, he became editor of Borealis. Editing our newsletter kept him busy, but for an active Mensan, that was not enough and so he also became the newsletter editor for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse. Stan continued as the Borealis editor longer than any member of NMM has held in any type of executive committee post. After 13 years, he decided to pass his editing pen to someone else and fully retired in March 2019. Stan regularly wrote articles for Borealis, took photos for the cover page and to support a story or event that had occurred. He coordinated nature hikes, and was a regular member of the TGIF group. As a dedicated participant of the Bibliomensans book discussion group, he often brought insight into areas of discussion where he had first-hand knowledge and experience. Because he so enjoyed intellectual friendships, and NMM was such an important part of his life, he became a life member. Rest in peace my kind and gentle friend.

By Sherry McNamara

This month in history

One hundred years ago, on December 30, 1922, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed. After World War I, Russia recognized the independence of Finland. Russia had annexed Finland in 1809, but allowed its independence, believing Finnish communists (“Reds”) would control the government, but the democrats (“Whites”) took control after a civil war. At the same time, wars of independence broke out in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. With the Russian communists in their own civil war, they did not have the power to control these countries. At the Versailles Conference in France, the allies declared Polish independence under the White party further eroding Russian territory. Once the communists won their civil war they consolidated their power by forming the USSR from four entities, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Transcaucasia. By 1940, the union had expanded to 15 republics through annexation with the final three, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, absorbed in 1940 at the beginning of World War II.

Christmas Helpers

Many countries have helpers for Santa Claus, including the elves you find with department store Santas. But not all helpers are fun. Jólakötturinn is Iceland’s version of the not-so-friendly helper. In America, seeing new clothes under the tree is not what most kids want. They want the latest Playstation. But in Iceland, getting new clothes is almost mandatory. If children have not received new clothes by Christmas Eve, Jólakötturinn or the Yule Cat comes a-callin’. Anyone not well dressed gets eaten. Jólakötturinn’s legend probably began during the Middle Ages. According to tradition, children who finish their chores are rewarded with new clothes, so any lazy children deserve their fate. Jólakötturinn is not just any old house cat. He towers over the town, spying in windows to find shabbily dressed (“lazy”) kids. He will then eat their dinner and finish with the kids as dessert. Besides being used as a warning to children, it also encourages generosity. Any children who give clothing to the less fortunate gain immunity from being kitty kibble, as do the recipients of the charity.

- John Devoti is a member of Delaware Valley Mensa. Reprinted with permission.

Happy December Birthday!

Josh Ockert December 7

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of continuous Membership)

- 14 Years Bartholomew Halliday
- 16 Years Benjamin Anderson
- 16 Years Vicki Carpenter
- 24 Years Abby Hayes
- 31 Years John Reed
- 44 Years Howard Konetchy

New Members

We welcome the following three rejoining members!

- Rejoined
- September John Phelps, Traverse City
- August Kenneth Bazzett, Traverse City
- August Susan Nolff, Traverse City

Contact Jim McDermott for more information, or to help.

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|-------------|----------|------------|-----------|--------|
| Adobo | Honey | Cinnamon | Brandy | Rum |
| Anise | Lemon | Coconut | Cardamom | Savory |
| Bay | Mace | Cumin | Chai | |
| BrownSugar | Onion | Fenugreek | Chili | |
| | Sage | Ginger | Chocolate | |
| Cassia | Thyme | Juniper | Cloves | |
| Cherry | Allspice | Lemongrass | Coffee | |
| Chimichurri | Annatto | Maple | Dill | |
| Cilantro | Bourbon | Orange | Galangal | |
| Cocoa | Caraway | Salt | Hazelnut | |
| Coriander | Celery | Vanilla | Lavender | |
| Fennel | Chervil | Ancho | Lime | |
| Garlic | Chive | Basil | Nutmeg | |

Election Report

Two days before voting day, my wife and I got a call from our township clerk; two election inspectors had dropped out and she needed us. So we showed up at the township hall on Tuesday promptly at 6:00 AM, bearing food enough for the whole crew. So did they, resulting in food enough for 5 crews. In the end we had little time to eat any of it: turnout was high so we stayed busy.

We were new but fortunately everyone else was experienced - one volunteer knew half the voters by name. They had their roles and duties, the coolest was opening the doors wide and crying out "Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye! The polls are now [open | closed]!"

My main job was to rip stubs off ballots and, standing the legally mandated 10 feet away, instruct voters how to stick 'em into the tallying machine. This was non-intuitive for many. After trying many variant instructions, I ended up saying "the ballot goes under that little black plastic curved half-moon shaped thingie." Somehow the more descriptors I threw in, the better they were able to execute.

We had a good time. It's inspiring to see young people coming in to vote for their first time, and to witness the diversity of voters. And we volunteers developed feelings of solidarity and mutual respect.

The vote handling and counting procedures are so carefully set up and scripted that there is basically zero room for error, and it'd be very difficult to cheat. Everything's supervised (or "inspected") by both a Democrat and a Republican; and there are safeguards upon safeguards. You don't need to be smart to do the work - just very detailed, organized, careful, methodical, and compliant with the rules, which amount to very finely detailed (and excellent) scripts.

Our day finished at 10:00 PM but not the clerk's - she drove the (sealed, tamperproof) ballot boxes down to the county courthouse. After dealing with their hours-long processes she hoped to make it home some time during the wee hours. As for us: it felt might fine, to relax at home after our mere 16-hour day.

- Leo Hesting, Northern Michigan Mensan

Gingerbread Cake

Ingredients

Softened unsalted butter, as needed
 1 cup vegetable oil, like soy, peanut, or corn
 1 cup sugar
 1 cup unsulphured molasses
 1 to 2 tablespoons minced crystallized ginger
 2 large eggs, at room temperature, lightly beaten with a fork
 3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon ground ginger
 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon fine salt
 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
 1 cup water
 1 tablespoon baking soda

Directions

Lightly butter a 9 by 13 by 2-inch cake pan and line the bottom with a piece of parchment or wax paper. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, sugar, molasses, and crystallized ginger. Add the eggs and whisk until smooth.

In another large bowl, whisk together the flour, ground ginger, cinnamon, salt, and cloves. Whisk the molasses mixture into the flour mixture until evenly combined.

In a small saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Remove from the heat and stir in the baking soda. Whisk the hot water into the batter until just combined. Transfer the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Cool the cake in the pan on a rack. Cut into squares and serve with whipped or ice cream.

Break of Day

by John Donne

'Tis true, 'tis day, what though it be?

O wilt thou therefore rise from me?

Why should we rise because 'tis light?

Did we lie down because 'twas night?

Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,

Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;

If it could speak as well as spy,

This were the worst that it could say,

That being well I fain would stay,

And that I loved my heart and honour so,

That I would not from him, that had them, go.

Must business thee from hence remove?

Oh, that's the worst disease of love,

The poor, the foul, the false, love can

Admit, but not the busied man.

He which hath business, and makes love, doth do

Such wrong, as when a married man doth woo.

Elected Members

Local Secretary	Leo Hesting	231-465-5111	leo@pevex.com
Deputy LocSec	Heather Hollick	919-360-1532	heather@heatherhollick.com
Treasurer	John Porter	231-499-9662	porterjm17@gmail.com
At-Large	Jaeger Griswold	313-690-4867	jaegergriz@peoplepc.com
At-Large	Seeking volunteer		

Appointed Members

Membership	Jim McDermott	231-943-7792	jhmcdermott@yahoo.com
Ombudsman	Josh Ockert	231-288-0125	lee.ockert@gmail.com
Scholarship	Seeking volunteer		
SIGHT	Melissa Rennie	231-889-4198	renmeij@yahoo.com
Financial Overseer	Sherry McNamara	231-313-2769	sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com
Bibliomensans	Sherry McNamara	231-313-2769	sherrymcnamara@hotmail.com
Newsletter Editor	H. Gruenberg-Seger	231-932-9501	britajax@gmail.com
Graphics Editor	- Seeking volunteers		
Program Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Publications Officer	Pro Tempore - Leo Hesting		
Website & Communications Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Testing Coordinator, Proctor, Proctor Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Regional Vice Chair	Lora Mitchell	614-450-0170	rvc3@us.mensa.org

Check out our website: www.nmm.us.mensa.org

On the cover: Rime on pine boughs after freezing fog
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