

Borealis

The Monthly Journal of Northern Michigan Mensa



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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.

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Bibliomensans

February 4

Book: This Tender Land: A Novel

Author: William Kent Krueger

Presenter: Mary Shaw

Location: Via Zoom

In the summer of 1932, on the banks of Minnesota's Gilead River, the Lincoln Indian Training School is a pitiless place where Native American children, forcibly separated from their parents, are sent to be educated. It is also home to Odie O'Banion, a lively orphan boy whose exploits constantly earn him the superintendent's wrath. Odie and his brother, Albert, are the only white faces among the hundreds of Native American children at the school.

All Northern Michigan Mensans welcome to participate.

Contact Sherry McNamara for invitation and Zoom link.

Mid-America Mensa RG - Kansas City

February 10–12, 2023

Mid-America Mensa invites you to get out of the winter doldrums and join us in Kansas City for our annual Regional Gathering — Cabin Fever!

Games galore, a wide variety of speakers to pique any interest, and of course, the camaraderie of great minds. Cabin Fever 2023 is scheduled to be held February 10-12, 2023, at the DoubleTree Hotel, 10100 College Blvd, Overland Park, KS. Registration is open at the link below.

Early Bird registration per person is: \$99 till December 15; \$109 till January 15; \$119 till January 31; \$129 in February. For youth under age 18 as of February 10, 2023, registration is \$40.



España by Giles Tremlett

Reviewed by Leo Hesting

España: A Brief History of Spain (2022) by Giles Tremlett, has been called “the best-written and certainly most accessible single-volume history of Spain.” That may be correct - it’s very good.

I learned something about Francisco Franco as a person. Apparently “He was a skilled exponent of *retranca*, a deliberate ambivalence that trips up other people and is reputed to be a mark of people from Galicia.” Quoting Franco himself: “One is the master of what one does not say, and the slave of what one does.” Maybe that explains (at least in part) how he was able to remain in power so long.

A theme I’ve read elsewhere, but found difficult to understand, is the idea of people - in this case a whole nation - not just succumbing &/or agreeing to a dictatorship, but actually and actively supporting it. Apparently most people will quite willingly accede to a dictatorship if the alternative is chaos, which can get very ugly.

Tremlett addresses this, writing of Queen Isabella’s reign: “After the chaos caused by warring between *grandees* and the insecurity of previous decades, people also appeared to want tighter rules that made them safer.” Or, the scholar Antonio de Nebrija’s “extensive and wide-ranging works reflected an increasingly self-confident, stable and wealthy society where culture could be cultivated without fear of massive societal disruption from war, rebellion or the breakdown of law and order.”

There’s a lot more to the book besides fascism and the “order versus chaos” scale. I learned, for example, that historically, Spain hadn’t really been a country so much as a fractious collection of kingdoms or principalities. In part due simply to Spain’s geography. With modern communications, the “union pains” are still playing out. It isn’t all bad by any means - apparently it’s fashionable nowadays among young Spaniards to adopt the accent I fell in love with myself, from that Andalusia region. Well, I don’t blame them.

Quoting another reviewer, Tremlett “writes with a fluency that few contemporary historians can match.” I agree.

On February 21, 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published *The Communist Manifesto*. The pamphlet, which totaled 23 pages, outlined basic communist philosophy and was issued at the end of the second congress of the League of Communists held in December, 1847. It argued that history was a made up of a series of class struggles ending with the capitalist system that led to “the common ruin of the contending classes.” Marx and Engels claimed that Communists were the leaders of the proletariat (workers) whose only goal was the elevation of the proletariat class in a revolution against the bourgeoisie (owners). The manifesto advocated alliance with revolutions across many countries to overthrow bourgeois leaders. It ended with the battle-cry “Working men of all Countries, unite!” Several workers’ revolutions broke out in various countries, but only France’s led to real governmental change. However, both *The Communist Manifesto* and Marx’s later three-volume *Das Kapital* were the inspiration for the many “Marxist” revolutions in the 20th century, beginning with the Russian Revolution of 1917.

On February 22, 1848, the French Revolution (of that year) began, leading to the abdication of King Louis-Philippe on February 24 and the start of France’s Second Republic. According to the Charter of 1814 signed after Napoleon Bonaparte’s abdication, a series of monarchs reigned, the French Revolution of 1830 happened, and during the 1830s and 1840s, French citizens, almost all of whom could not vote, watched Great Britain grant voting rights to Britons paying £10 a year, resulting in a substantial increase in representation. Bad French harvests in 1846 and 1847 added government food management to citizens’ complaints along with voting rights. Beginning in late 1847, a series of banquets was held during which socialist and communist speakers incited workers to rebel. On January 14, 1848, Prime Minister François Guizot prohibited a banquet but organizers decided to hold it anyway, on February 22. Protest crowds quickly overcame the small police force. The government called out more troops. On the next day, an encounter at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led to shootings that resulted in 52 dead and 74 injured. At this point, King Louis-Philippe’s government had all resigned and he was unable to form another one. As the crowd approached the Tuileries palace, the king abdicated and the royal family fled. The protesters occupied the palace and later announced a new republic.

- John Devoti, Delaware Valley Mensan. Used by permission.

Happy February Birthday!

Thomas Rasmussen - 24 February

Mensa Membership Milestones (Years of continuous Membership)

- 1 year Gary S Cools
- 15 years Heather J Gruenberg-Seger
- 15 years Sherry L Saites
- 15 years Erik A Snyder
- 16 years John G Swartout
- 17 years Julie L Hill
- 18 years James H McDermott
- 19 years Cheri L Johnston
- 38 years Robert Alan Atallo

Bonus Questions

Do you suppose that James H McDermott (above) is the same person as Jim McDermott, our membership coordinator (below)?

Do you suppose that someone with a background in graphic design could lay out this page a little better, so it's more sightly?

How about this: is the opposite of "unsightly", "sightly?"

Membership matters:

Contact Jim McDermott for more information, or to help.

Cryptogram

“BW SPP KXW. JZW DESP XOT’J JE

PXRW YEHWRWH, JZW DESP XO JE

MHWSJW OEIWJZXTD JZSJ BXPP.”

- MZQMG LSPSZTXQG

Cryptogram hint:

[Do Mensans really need a hint? My dad used to solve these without any hint, and he wasn't a Mensan. Seems to make it too easy. Still, here it is:] “I wxll substxtute”

Light verse

By the time you swear you're his,

Shivering and sighing,

And he vows his passion is

Infinite, undying -

Lady, make a note of this:

One of you is lying.

- Dorothy Parker

Volunteers Needed

In a recent ExComm meeting it was brought to attention, that anyone interested in joining Mensa, going to Mensa's web site to find out where tests are administered, finds that you have to go all the way to Ann Arbor. This leaves - what? - about 90% of the state unserved.

The process of becoming a Mensa proctor is not terribly difficult, though it involves several steps. You have to have a 4-year degree; you need some letters of recommendation, there are a few other requirements and hoops.

Mensa as an organization, including Northern Michigan Mensa, is aging, and there's the question asked of all groups (churches, Rotary, Elks, Zonta, political parties, bowling leagues, you name 'em) - will organizations as we know them even survive? Arguably they will not, as younger people have their various needs met - that once would've been fulfilled by organizational membership - in other ways.

There is only one antidote to an organization's aging out of existence - that is, to actively recruit and retain younger members. In Mensa's case, that involves either "testing in" using Mensa's own test, or gaining membership using some proxy. But these proxy tests are increasingly less universal. Leaving a need for Mensa tests, and proctors to administer them.

If you think you may be able to help out by becoming a proctor, please contact an ExComm member.

Sauerkraut Soup

This is a variation of two different traditional Polish recipes. If you go to Poland and are served their sauerkraut soup (called "*kapuśniak*") this is not what you will get.* But it's still pretty good!

Ingredients

Stock:

1/2 leek (split the leek lengthwise)

3 carrots, peeled

1 parsnip (or 2 "parsley root"), peeled

1/2 celery root, peeled (can substitute 3 "celery butts")

Sauerkraut mixture:

2 medium onions, peeled and diced

4 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced (into french-fry size pieces)

1/4 cup olive oil

Salt and pepper to taste

1 pound sauerkraut

Directions

Salt 3 quarts of water to taste, bring the stock veggies to boil, simmer for 2 hours. Meanwhile in a separate thick-bottom pot, saute onions in oil until clear, add potatoes, salt, and pepper, saute together for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally as needed to prevent scorching. Combine all ingredients and bring to boil - simmer for 30 minutes.

*Most Polish soups, including this one, are made with a stock containing the four vegetables listed, collectively called "*włoszczyzna*". This veggie combo is so standard that packets of the 4 vegetables are commonly sold in markets, in the right proportions, often tied up in a small bundle with a piece of thread. Classic Polish sauerkraut soup doesn't use that stock.

From the Editor

In my last column I said I'd tell you about the State Theatre here in Traverse City. Set on the eastern end of Front Street, it has tan and burgundy draperies on the walls, and dark red, padded seats which almost rock. Each seat has a memory tag on the back of it; when the theatre reopened in 2007, it was a way to raise money. I wanted to buy one to honor my dad, who was the one who took us to the movies when I was growing up, but I couldn't afford it. Still, it's a good place to see a show, but only if you want to see something generally off the beaten path of the traditional large movie house chain. The ceiling has lights set in the pattern of an August night-time sky, even.

Officially, the building opened in 1916 as the single screen Lyric Theatre; burned and reopened in 1923, then burned again in 1948 and reopened as the State Theatre in 1949. In 1978 it became a two-screen theater, running as such until 1996, when it stopped showing movies. I have to admit I only moved to Traverse City in 2001, and am a bit unclear as to the happenings at the State in the early 2000s but, according to their website, in 1996 there were plans to make the theater a performing arts complex. Also in 1996 'the State Theatre Group and Rotary Charities kept the theater safe from weather and time while plans were made for its future'. That same State Theatre Group and the Interlochen Center for the Arts came together in 2003 to renovate the theater. Somebody in Rotary Club could maybe fill me in on how the State came to be in Rotary's hands; in any case, they donated it to the Traverse City Film Festival in 2007. Detractors of Michael Moore's may grumble now.

So what do you do on a Saturday night? I don't go to the State, or even to the movies. Tonight I played with my cats and attended Smoky Mountain Mensa's Zoom presentation about Harry and Harriette Moore. He and his wife taught when schools were still segregated by race; he started the Brevard County chapter of the NAACP; and he died when his house was bombed at Christmas in 1951. You can look up his story at the Harry T. and Harriette Moore Cultural Complex in Mims, FL; their website is harryharriette.moore.org.

Next Saturday night? I predict I will play with my cats and attend Southeastern Michigan Mensa's Zoom presentation about how NASA carried out a Double Asteroid Redirection Test back in the fall. I don't always remember these Mensa presentations are occurring; I do recommend them as a good way to spend an hour or two on a night which just seems to be a minor stop between working Saturday at the YMCA and working Sunday at Meijer. How do I hear about them? Word of mouth. If anybody in your area is presenting something via Zoom, let me know. I'm interested.

Northern Michigan Mensa Officers

Elected Members

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

Appointed Members

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Publications Officer	Pro Tempore - Leo Hesting		
Website & Communications Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		
Testing Coordinator, Proctor, Proctor Coordinator	- Seeking volunteers		

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

On the cover: Sheboygan Breakwater Lighthouse at Sunrise
by Jordan M. Limibao, via Wikimedia Commons