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"Oh, I just can't wait to get..."

Notes from Heather Booton, HalloweeM Chair



Let's hit the road! We are ready to roll for "HalloweeM 48 – Road Trippin' WeeM." A warm welcome to all who have joined us from both near and far. It's great to see all the new people and see so many familiar faces returning this year. I'm so glad that you've joined us for what is, in my completely biased opinion, the best RG that Mensa has to offer. I know you'll have a wonderful time at the event we've worked so hard to put together for you.

We couldn't run such a great RG without the WeeM TeaM. Every year I'm truly touched by the dedication and hard work they put into making this weekend fun for everyone. They are the road warriors who pave the way for everyone to have a spectacular weekend. Please let them know how much you appreciate them. You can recognize our WeeM TeaM by their light green badges and WeeM TeaM ribbons.

Let's keep traffic flowing smoothly! Our White Hat team can be recognized by their white hats. They are here to check badges, make sure alcohol is being consumed responsibly, and act as a friendly face in the unlikely event that you have any problems. Feel free to approach them if you encounter any potholes.

We couldn't run WeeM without the help of great volunteers. To all our "roadies" who have already signed up for shifts—THANK YOU! If you haven't signed up yet, please consider helping—many hands make light work. You can find QR codes at registration, around the event, and in this program book that will let you directly access our volunteer signup sheet. If you do not have a smart phone, please seek out our volunteer coordinator Catrina Hays.

I'm really looking forward to a great weekend with friends both old and new. I hope you are too!

"Life is beautiful if you are on the road to somewhere" - Orhan Pamuk

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Notes from the Program Chair

All Roads Lead to WeeM. Okay, all roads don't lead to WeeM—but they should and we're so glad that yours did.

The first thing that you'll notice as you read through the offerings is that there are more programs to attend than there are hours in the day and there are multiple programs going on simultaneously at the same time that you'll wish you could attend. That was the goal of the team that solicited speakers; we wanted attendees to be overwhelmed with choices.

The program booklet, of course, is printed before the RG. There can be detours along the road, so check the PAAG (Program at a Glance) for any updates. Printed PAAGs (Program at a Glance) will be available at the registration desk each day. It's a good idea to also keep an eye on the digital PAAG because some road closures and diversions are last minute. See page 4 for the QR code and URL for our digital PAAG, complete with hyperlinks taking you to detailed descriptions of the programs and speakers. This is possible thanks to the many hours of dedication by our talented webmaster, Barb Pohl and Logistics Chair, Lacee Hudec.

There are also activities (and a Youth PAAG) for our youngest road trippers. If you have a family member or guest with you who is under 18, they should be given a copy of the Youth PAAG at registration, but you can also find it with the regular PAAG or in the babysitting room.

We love hearing your comments! Our speakers also appreciate this feedback, so please make sure to fill out a survey for them (e-version: https://bit.ly/WeeM2024Speakers) or jot things down on the back of your daily PAAG and drop it in the box by registration.

You're encouraged to attend any and all of the activities. Maybe you'll find a new passion, learn something life-changing, add destinations to your bucket list, or just belly-laugh until it hurts. This year will be unique, no matter what, and we're so glad you're road tripping with us!

Beth Weiss

2024 Program Chair

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Policies & Reminders

Before you enjoy the festivities, please review the policies and reminders that follow.

Name Badges: Your name badge is your ticket to all the joys and wonders of HalloweeM. Please wear it at all times. With a group as large and diverse as ours, the tags are the only way we have of knowing who belongs to the RG. Anyone without a name badge should be referred to registration or to an event host (designated by their green badges). Sorry, lost name badges cannot be replaced.

Smartphone, Tablet, and other E-Gear Users: Please be courteous by silencing your devices when at programs or events. If you don't know how to silence your device, please leave it in your room, lest you be mocked mercilessly. Free Wi-Fi is available in the hotel lobby. Scannable QR codes are posted near registration to allow you to easily download the program booklet and Program at a Glance (PAAG) in PDF form.

Program At A Glance (PAAG): The PAAG includes some updates to the program which were too late to make it into the program book. There may be signs posted at the programming rooms or near registration with information that is fresher still. We're confident you'll know what's up. Scan the code here, or go to: https://tinyurl.com/WeeM47PAAG Some events are age-restricted (usually 21+), and you may be asked to show proof of age. Finally, please note that a few events do not start and end on the same time boundaries as most.

Program Schedule: There are often intervals set between programs in the programming grid. Check the times listed carefully. The current daily PAAG is the most up-to-date source with respect to error corrections, room changes, speaker cancellations, etc.

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About the Speakers: Please bear in mind that the speakers have donated their time and resources to be with us this weekend. Many of them are not Mensans and this is their first (and maybe only) exposure to the organization. Mensa's reputation depends on the actions and attitudes of each of us. If you enter or leave during a program, please do so quietly in deference to the speaker and other attendees. Show consideration, even if you disagree with a speaker. Unless a speaker requests otherwise, please hold questions and comments until the end of the presentation.

Alcohol and Youth: Illinois law, hotel rules, and Chicago Area Mensa policies are strict when it comes to underage drinking. The legal drinking age here is 21. Please do not be insulted if you are asked for proof of age. Anyone with a brightly colored "under 21" badge is not permitted to be in areas where alcohol is available. These areas are easy to spot in hospitality and in the program guide. Adherence to this rule has been stressed to all Hospitality gHosts. Even if you choose to allow your children to consume alcohol at home, you are NOT free to do the same at HalloweeM.

Dry-Erase Board: A dry-erase board will be available near the registration area for posting personal messages, program changes, and other announcements. Please re-cap the markers after use.

Decorations: Every year, we make a sizable investment of time and money in creating the right ambiance at HalloweeM. Please do not disturb or remove the decorations. Many of them are haunted. We cannot be held responsible for any paranormal activities if you remove the sacred monkey paw from its resting chamber.

Food and Beverages: HalloweeM food and beverages MUST remain in the Ravinia Ballroom. Food will NOT be permitted in the games room this year, but beverages are allowed. However, please DO NOT take food or beverages into the other speaker rooms. Water is available outside most of the speaker rooms, if you become parched. **And friends, please, clean up after yourselves! Just like life: strive to leave the table better than when you sat down. If you drop something, don't leave it there. If something spills, contact a WeeM-Teamer or hotel staff. Thank you.**

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Volunteers

HalloweeM is a big event. It takes a village of volunteers to ensure things run smoothly. The WeeM TeaM is always happy to accept new recruits to make our RG spectacular. Please scan this QR code (or go to https://cam.ivolunteer.com/weem_2024) and sign up! Volunteers will get one raffle ticket for every hour they help. Earn double tickets to help with Set-Up on Thursday and Tear-Down on Sunday!

If you volunteer for Hospitality, please sign up in advance. FYI: Mealtime shifts begin 30 min. prior to posted mealtimes to allow for implementation of sanitation protocols, including wearing gloves. Hospitality servers to assist with Friday night's dinner and Saturday's lunch are particularly appreciated as those are really busy meals. Volunteers will be able to sign up online from their phone, tablet, or computer DURING WeeM! To help with this, we will post fliers with the volunteer link and a convenient QR-code around WeeM. Scanning the code or going to the Web address will take you to our iVolunteer site where you can sign up for any shift at any time. If you don't have a smart device that can scan the code, please seek out the volunteer coordinator to sign up for a shift.

In exchange for donating 4 hours or more of your time, you receive a HalloweeM volunteer collector's pin, and the warm fuzzy feeling of knowing you made the world a better place for others! Each ticket you earn can be entered in the raffle on Sunday morning for prizes, so make sure to get your signed tickets in our raffle box before then.

Volunteers do not need to be present at the raffle drawings to receive major prizes, but minor prizes (< $21 value) will be awarded only to those who are on-site during the awards ceremony.

Please, join our volunteer village! With your help we can do incredible things like WeeM!

A break from the crowds: There is a nature walk along the river just outside the south door of the hotel. It's a great place for a breather.

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Hugs: Yes, maybe, no? Colored stickers signify your hugging preference. Pick up a sticker for your name badge at the registration desk and check the stickers that others wear. If a hug sticker isn't on someone's badge, or if there is any doubt, please ask before hugging. And please remember, even if the sticker is green, "NO" means "NO."

Harassment: HalloweeM will be a friendly and safe environment for our attendees. Unwelcome physical contact and other forms of harassment will not be tolerated. **Failure to comply with this policy may result in removal from the event without a refund, and police intervention, if warranted**. If you have concerns or need to report misconduct, find a member of the Peace Force, recognized by their white hats. If you need immediate and direct intervention for your personal safety, request assistance from security at the front desk.

Late Check-out: When you check in, please let the hotel desk staff know if you need a late check-out time at the end of the weekend. Based on their expected vacancy level, they will do all they can to accommodate as many as they can.

Smoking: By Illinois state law as well as hotel policy, smoking (including vaping and E-cigs) is permitted outside the hotel in designated areas only.

Pet Policy: In keeping with Chicago Area Mensa's pet policy, no non-human animals are allowed in any event space (hospitality or speaker/meeting rooms) unless they are service animals. Pets are still allowed in guest rooms.

Hotel kitchens and service corridors: Due to concerns from the hotel staff, **only** authorized volunteers will be allowed in the service corridors and hotel kitchens. If we are out of something and it needs to be replenished, please alert one of the hospitality volunteers or one of the event hosts who are wearing green badges. We reserve the right to revoke the badges of anyone who goes in these areas without permission.

Photo Booth Is Back! A photo booth will be available from 7:30-11:30 PM Saturday, in the front hall outside Pretentious Drinking. There will be props you can use to make your photo even more special. You will get a copy of your masterpiece, and electronic copies will be saved.You have been warned...

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WeeM Lo

All Weekend

Young Children



For kids 8 and under, we will again have activities and plenty of opportunities for supervised play all weekend long in Maple. To help cover the cost of the babysitters, parents who did not pre-register their child for babysitting will be charged $20 per day per child ($50 for the whole weekend). The Kids' Room will be open Friday from 4:00 until 11:00 PM, Saturday from 9AM - noon, 1:00 - 5:30 PM, and 7:00 - 11:00 PM, and Sunday from 9 AM - noon. We will close the room for an hour during all scheduled meals (including Saturday evening) and will take "field trips" to some of the WeeM Programs that are especially good for kids. Look for signs outside the Kids' Room for up-to-the-minute details.

Little ones are welcome in the Kids' Room if they are able to play with a group of older children. While there will be two responsible adults with the children at all times, this is a popular program that draws a lot of kids and features plenty of "ages 3 and up" toys. If your children are not potty trained, parents are responsible for diaper changes. Snacks will be provided in the Kids' Room at intervals throughout the weekend, but you must pick up your kids and visit Hospitality when the Kids' Room is closed for meal breaks or whenever you are hungry.

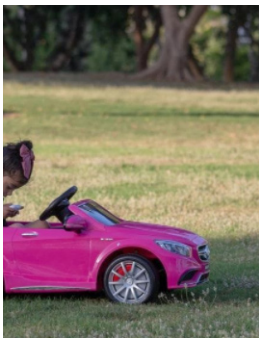
Games and T

Game Room: Ravinia A & B

The Game Rooms will open Thursday evening and remain open around the clock until Sunday afternoon, even if there is a tournament. (These times will be posted.) We have a wide assortment to choose from. Please do not leave your small children unattended in the game room.

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ves Kids!



We will once again have a kids-only costume parade at 6:30 PM Friday before the adult parade. Bring your kids directly to the parade in costume. Kids do not need to be registered for babysitting to participate in the costume parade.

IMPORTANT: For the children's safety, a responsible adult must sign each child in and out of the kids' room *every time* the child leaves or re-joins the program. Parents must remain in the hotel at all times when their children are in the Kids' Room. If children prove to be uncontrollable or dangerous, their parents will be asked to remove them from the room and they will not be allowed to participate further.

All Weekend

Tweens and Teens (12-17)

Participants under 18 years of age who are old enough to be unsupervised must register with a responsible adult or have their parents sign a release form at registration and provide contact information where a responsible adult can be reached ***at the hotel*** throughout the weekend.

'ournaments

Tournaments

Check in Hospitality near games entrance for Amazing Race sign-up and late-breaking tourneys. No sign-up required: 7 Wonders on Thursday at 7:30 p.m. and Logic Tournaments at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday. Note: the Caber Toss tournament has been moved from the fitness room to the north side of the roof. Formal attire, please.

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All Weekend

Massage Therapists

Chair Massages will be available in the vendor hall on Friday (9 am - 1 pm and 3 - 7 pm), and Saturday (9 am - 1 pm). Cost is $20 for a 15 minute session. CASH ONLY! Sign-up in advance to reserve your spot.

Book Sale

Browse through donated book and non-book items, and take home some real treasures. We charge 50¢ per book or 3/$1, for paperbacks; $1 each for hardcovers or 3/$2.50; and $1.00/bag on Sunday. VHS and audio cassette tapes are $1, CDs are $2, and DVDs are $3. Books on tape or CD are $2. All proceeds are going to "Working in the Schools." More info on this worthy non-profit can be found here: https://witschicago.org/

Alcohol-related programs

This year we have three alcohol-related programs: Thursday's Whisky Tasting, Friday's Fictional Cocktails, and Saturday's Wine Tasting. Space at each of these programs is limited, and we want to give all our attendees an equal opportunity to participate in these events. So, when you attend, your badge will be punched, and you will not be able to attend another unless there is still space available 5 minutes after the program has started. Please arrive early for your event, as they are expected to max out.



This new policy does NOT affect attendance at Pretentious Drinking, which, as always, is open to all WeeM attendees 21 or older.

LIKE THE LAST FEW YEARS: Alcohol will **NOT** be available all night. Exact times will vary, but generally, alcohol will be unavailable between 2:00 AM and 10 AM.

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Due to the timing for the program book preparation, any last-minute changes to the schedule will be reflected in the "Program At A Glance," available at the registration desk.

Thursday

Early Morning to Late Afternoon

Setting Up

Mostly in the the Hospitality Area

Welcome! We're so glad you came to our RG! And you're so early! We don't officially open our doors until 4:00 PM, but you are more than welcome to roll up your sleeves and help out. There are dozens of things to do, and your help will be greatly appreciated. If you choose not to help out, please leave the sandwiches and beverages for those who are working, and don't be offended if we ask you to please get out of the way!

5:30 – 7:00 PM

HalloweeM Pumpkin Paint-A-Palooza

John Bradford

Willow

We supply a collection of communal art and craft supplies. You paint and accessorize a mini-pumpkin (also provided) to make your HalloweeM/Halloween decoration. Fun for all ages!

7:00 – 8:30 PM

Dinner

Hospitality

Catered by Pear Tree Hel's Kitchen – Fall Salad, Choice of Sonoma Chicken (GF) or Balsamic Grilled Salmon (GF,DF) Entree; along with Parmesan Truffle Orzo (V), Asparagus Gremolata (GF,DF,V), Roasted Butternut Squash (GF,DF,V) & dinner rolls.

Please, friends, make the effort to clean up after yourselves. Thank you!

7:30 – 8:45 PM

Ferengi as Jewish Representation: Good, Bad or Neither; a Conversation

Nathaniel Arons

Birch

First conceived to represent the worst elements of capitalist society and portrayed as short hunched monkey men, the Ferengi didn't find their true place in Star Trek lore until DS9. During DS9, the Ferengi characters became fan favorites but there's since been a backlash. Some say they're anti-Semitic caricatures. In this session we'll discuss Star Trek; its creation & creators; the Ferengi & their culture; how they are viewed both in world & out; and try to come to a conclusion.

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7:30 – 8:45 PM cont'd.

AG 2025 Preview
Allison Reeves & Karen Gruebele

Michigan A



When it comes to throwing a Mensan party, no place does it quite as well as Chicago - simply the best! It's been 50 years since our last AG. Join us for a preview of next year's Chicago AG. Bring any questions you have.

7:30 – 9:30 PM

Seven Wonders Tournament
Glenn Sutton

Willow

Come play Antoine Bauza's classic game "7 Wonders!" Any experience level is welcome. (If you need to learn the game, please come 15 minutes early or watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnBLz61FJYw.) Rounds will be played in 30 minutes, with each table's winner advancing to the next round. Come join us for some exciting fun!

9:00 PM – 10:15

HELL's M's Meeting
Beth Weiss

Michigan A

Why are so many people wearing black shirts with attack owls? And what's a Party Animal? Do Mensans really take long trips together? Come find out what HELL's M's is up to.

9:00 PM – 11:00

Whisk(e)y Tasting Adventure - Buckle Up!
Jennifer Morris

Michigan B

Let's take a trip across the country and around the world exploring diverse whisk(e)y expressions! "What I need... is a strong drink and a peer group." ~Douglas Adams. New and seasoned whisk(e)y drinkers welcomed! ****21+ / capacity limit 45****

9:00 PM – Late



Social-Deduction Games: Werewolves of WeeM
Stephen Rider

Elm

Are you a werewolf? If not, who is??? Come discover which of your friends is secretly harboring special dietary needs in this classic game of social deduction.

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Friday

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Breakfast

Hospitality

Continental Breakfast – Bagels & Schmear, Hot (microwavable) & Cold Cereals (some GF), Fruit, Yogurt, Milk, Coffee, Juices

Please friends, make the effort to clean up after yourselves. Thank you!

Coffee with the AMC

Matt Crawford

Hospitality

There are always several members of American Mensa's Board of Directors (the AMC) at WeeM. Please bring your morning beverage and join a very informal discussion about Mensa's national organization and current plans. We'll answer your questions, and ask you a few. Want to know how Mensa spends your dues money? Have an idea about how to make Mensa better? We'd love to hear your thoughts. This is your chance to learn about Mensa at the national level, and more importantly, let your AMC representatives know what you're thinking!

9:00 - 10:15 AM

Trust Me, I'm a Crisis Behavioral Interventionist

Casey Carraher

Willow

What are the 4 possible functions of all behavior, and why should I care? Come find out..

Metro Chicago Water Systems, Ensuring Healthy and Sustainable Resources

Richard Lanyon

Birch

A long canal, surmounting the subcontinental divide, allowed the polluted river to flow away by gravity to the Mississippi River. Eventually, construction of sewage collection and treatment infrastructure cleaned up the river. The construction of a huge tunnel and reservoir system to capture and treat all combined sewer overflow. Initial opposition to the diversion of Lake Michigan water was resolved through litigation, protecting the lake, providing water for navigation on the Illinois Waterway, and providing safe drinking water for Northeast Illinois.

Seeing Another Way

Roger Breisch

Michigan A

Roger's 20 years answering calls on the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline brought him "face-to-face" with thousands of humans yearning for answers to life's struggles. He learned answers did not help callers as much as questions that asked them see themselves and their lives in new ways. Join us to see how you might also see your life in new ways.

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9:00 - 10:15 AM cont'd.

Nerdy Yoga with Jedi Master Mensa
Thomas Ryan

Michigan B



Come and join RYT Tommy Ryan (Mx. Mensa '16) for a relaxing but vigorous yoga flow. The pose names and the tone of the course will dip into nerdy references such as Star Wars (downward facing Chewbacca, anyone?), LoTR, and more! Stretch mind, body, spirit, and stretch out to the Force for a physical flow that will culminate in a guided meditation. Be sure to bring a mat or a towel to place on the floor along with any other props you might want.

10:30 - 11:45

Senior Living Myths Unmasked - Separating Fact From Fiction (21+ Only)
Andrea Donovan

Willow

Choosing a senior living option for yourself or a loved one can be a complicated, daunting task. Andrea Donovan is the owner of Andrea Donovan Senior Living Advisors, a geriatric care management and senior housing consulting firm. She has toured and evaluated over 500 senior living communities in the Chicago metropolitan area according to cost, methods of payment accepted, levels of care offered, quality of care, staffing, activities, food and cleanliness. She also assists seniors with staying at home safely. Her presentation unravels the myths and presents the facts about senior living.

Trust Me, I'm An Event Planner
Heather Booton

Birch

Ever wondered how to plan the perfect event? Should you contract with a hotel, a banquet hall, or just set up a tent in your yard? With years of experience finding venues for professional and private events, Heather can answer your questions about planning the perfect event, share tips for finding unconventional spaces, and discuss what to look for when reviewing event space contracts. Whether you're planning an RG for 100 or an intimate dinner for 10, this program will help you find the perfect event space for your budget and needs.

The State of Shapes; or rather, The Shape of States
EJBoris

Michigan A

C'mon, ***him*** again? So what is he babbling about this time? Ya, when a state becomes a state, it is the shape it is. Does he think they can just change their shape - like Clayface or Loki? Let's see what he has to say. Think he might throw in some other odds and ends from US history?

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10:30 - 11:45, cont'd.

Sound Bath Meditation
Natasha Walker

Michigan B

This experience will introduce you to the relaxing world of sound therapy. Come and immerse yourself in the soothing sounds and vibrations that will help you relax and rejuvenate. Crystal bowls, rain sticks, chimes, and other instruments will be played. Bring a yoga mat, blanket and pillow, or whatever will help you get comfortable and rest. Don't miss out on this opportunity to unwind and find inner peace!

Noon - 1:15 PM

Lunch Break

Hospitality

Pub Burgers, Chicken Patties, or Veggie Burgers (V) with a Selection of Toppings, accompanied by Sides.

I'm sure it goes without saying...

1:00 - 2:15 PM

Job Search Like a Pro — Résumés
Erica Reckamp

Willow

Learn how to craft content that performs well when subjected to AI and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), as well as human readers. We will discuss keyword-optimized resumes that showcase your value offering and EQ. Special topics include career change, return to work, and how to set yourself apart.

HELL's M's Invades the Baltics, or, Where the Heck is Estonia Anyway?
Jon Gruebele

Birch

Just over a month ago, a boatload of HELL's M's embarked on a 10-day cruise starting in Denmark, then traveling to Norway, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Sweden. We sailed with Norwegian Cruise Lines, a Mensa business partner. Come learn about our many exciting adventures and endure a brief, totally low pressure – or maybe impassioned – pitch to join us in HELL's M's. Rest assured, this presentation has at least some chance of being better than all the others scheduled at the same time!



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1:00 - 2:15 PM cont'd.

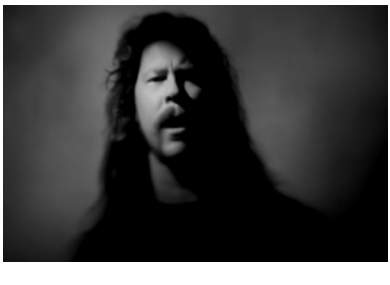
M-etaphysical SIG Meetup
Thomas Galanis

Elm

The M-etaphysical meetup is a place to discuss all things new age and metaphysical! A group that begin during the pandemic, we now enjoy monthly Zooms on a variety of topics and are now an official Mensa SIG. Join us at WeeM where we will have an open discussion - paranormal, psychic, light work and more. Come to listen, share, and support the lively discussions we are sure to have! Curious but not too familiar with the topics? Come and learn – we're a safe and open space that is welcoming to all. If you'd like to join us for our monthly Zooms, contact Tommy Galanis at 64bitpointer@gmail.com

Forgiveness Pressure: Why Anger and Resentment are Healing Potions and Forgiveness is the Real Poison
Tara Travia

Michigan A



"You will only heal if you find forgiveness in your heart!" Why does it always seem that people want us to forgive someone, but don't focus on the offender making it right? Instead, they make our valid feelings into their problem and tell us the solution must lie within us. In this talk, I will discuss what "forgiveness" really is (hint, it is not something for you to give!) and review some of the reasons others pressure us to "just let it go." I will then discuss ways anger and resentment are healthy, necessary emotions and how to cope with Forgiveness Pressure.

2:30 - 3:45

FroMMMage Cheese Swap
Lacee Hudec

Hospitality

Don't cheddar tear, it's gouda brie a grate day because we're ready to slice it up! Mild and sharp, fruity or stinky, bring some cheese to share and meet members of the FroMMMage facebook group! (Note: this is a 'Bring and Share' event.)

Parent/Kid Swim Time
Megan Bratkovich

Pool

Are your kids hoping for some swim time with you and other Mensan kids? Now's their chance! All kids must be accompanied by a responsible adult.



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2:00 - 5:00

Clandestine - Strategy Game Preview
Jason Brooks

Michigan B

Compete with your rivals as one of five unique Secret Societies, from the vigilante Weeping Masks to the technocratic Mariner's Union.Maneuver your Leaders and Followers through overlapping public and private rondels. Enhance your actions or consolidate your power with occult Relics. Master asymmetrical strategies with potent Secrets unique to your Society. Ascend to new levels of power, and build the most Intrigue when the final level is reached! Clandestine is currently a prototype with plans to publish soon (and is available to support on Kickstarter NOW). Only 20 spots available.

2:30 - 3:45 PM

Sushi Go! Battle
John Bradford

Willow

Pass the sushi! In this fast-playing card game, the goal is to grab the best combination of sushi dishes as they whiz by. Score points for making the most maki rolls or for collecting a full set of sashimi. Dip your favorite nigiri in wasabi to triple its value. But be sure to leave room for dessert or else you'll eat into your score!

The Festivus for the Rest of Us
CANCELLED

Birch

Come and rant and rave about anything you want for 5 minutes. You are encouraged to be humorous, but if you want to be offensive, feel free. But the audience can hoot and holler and shout you down, and will think you are a basic jerk if you choose to be offensive.

GenY Ms Meet & Greet (21+ only)
Kimberly Bakke

Elm

GenY Mensans are members of Mensa born between 1976 and 1996, but we always keep it 100. Meet and greet with us so we can spill the tea on adulting, cancel yet another archaic establishment, and keep the FOMO away. Be forewarned though that you may meet some rather odd personalities; we literally can't even.

Taoist Tai Chi Demonstration
Stella Bryant

Michigan A

The practice of Taoist Tai Chi arts helps to bring the mind, body, and spirit into balance providing many health benefits such as improved circulation, balance and posture which increases strength and flexibility and reduces stress. We will demonstrate (and have attendees try) a few moves, and answer questions.

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4:00 - 5:15 PM

Near-Death Experiences
Dan Punzak

Willow

People who nearly die, whether from an accident, suicide attempt, or medical incident, seem to have several strange impressions come to them. Dan believes these are indications of a spiritual experience, but others think they are simply hallucinations. Among these impressions is verified evidence supporting what they say they observed while comatose. Others may meet deceased relatives and/or go to a realm of light where they feel the most incredible love they have ever experienced. Dan will review a list of these varieties of impressions and explain why attempts to explain them are invalid.

The Isle Where Fairies Still Roam
Margie Martinson

Birch

There is a place, where the bus reminds you to greet the fairies when crossing a bridge on a major road. That place is unique Isle of Man, originally the home of a Sea God and fairy folk. Folklore is so apart of the culture that a field guide to 343 sites over the 221 square miles of the Isle has just been published. Hear tales of merfolk, witches, a talking mongoose and scary bugganes.

Gen X Ms SIG Meet and Greet
Tom Schnorrenberg

Elm

Do you miss big hair, “Raiders of the Lost Ark,” DeLoreans, Beanie Babies, Furbies, flannel, and slacker couture? We do too! Gen X Ms is a SIG that caters to members born between 1961 and 1981, but Mensans of all ages are welcome to attend. Join us to meet your fellow Gen-X Mensans for a warm and friendly social period. Bartles & Jaymes wine coolers are optional and we thank you for your support!.

Choose a Travelogue (or 2, or 3, …)
Mike McInerney

Michigan A

Choose from a selection of several personal travelogue videos (each video about ten minutes long) of Mike and DD’s wanderings. In addition to viewing the video, Mike and DD can add commentary to the adventure. Audience participation and discussion are encouraged.

5:30 – 6:45 PM

Spy School
Don Grayson

Willow

Ever wondered what “Spy School” was like during the age of Cold War? Find out from someone who was there. During my 30 year career, I was a civilian engineer for the Navy, a NATO rep to Sweden and a classified courier. It ain’t James Bond.

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5:30 – 6:45 cont'd.

So You Want To Be An Investigator?
Cookie Bakke

Birch

Previous Mensa audiences have assisted in "So You Want To Be An Investigator" sessions. A critical break in one cold case homicide investigation came from an AG audience participant. Can we do it again? Cookie, a licensed PI, always has a dozen open cases at any given time. This is an interactive presentation where audience participation is both encouraged and welcomed. Her cases are real, photos are graphic/disturbing, and the stakes are high. Adults only, please.

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Dinner

Hospitality

Italian night: Mostaccioli w/meat sauce, Meatballs, Florentine Stuffed Shells (V), Chicken Tenders (GF) accompanied by Sides.

Please note – Since the children's costume parade begins at 6:30, please allow families with children to eat first. Thank you.

As always, make the effort to clean up after yourselves. Please leave the space in better shape than how you found it. Thank you!

6:30 – 7:30 PM

Kids' Costume Parade/Contest

Michigan A/B

All children are invited to show off their costumes for prizes. Come see some little ones who are so cute, it's scary! Kids registered for babysitting are welcome to wear their costumes to the Kids' Room for the remainder of the evening.

7:30 – 9:00 PM

Adults' Costume Parade/Contest
Robert Stalzer, Emcee

Michigan A/B

It's one of the many things for which we are (justly) famous: costumes. Prizes will be awarded for Best Pun, Worst Pun, Best Traditional, Best Group, and whatever other categories strike the fancy of our judges, who are, as always, very open to bribes. If you will be entering the costume contest, be sure to get a numbered ticket. Long-time emcee Robert will be joined by prior emcee Steve Davidson, with a special guest appearance by Robert Little

Please SPEAK LOUDLY, SLOWLY, AND CLEARLY when you get to the microphone. The judges and the audience would like very much to hear the description of your costume.



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7:30 – 9:30 PM

It's A Wonderful World
Glenn Sutton

Botanic B

Come play Frédéric Guérard's classic game "It's A Wonderful World!" Any experience level is welcome to participate. (If you need to learn the game, please come 15 minutes early, or watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzCqs21EKzk). Rounds will be played in 30 minutes, with each table's winner advancing to the next round. Come join us for some exciting fun!

9:00 – 10:30 PM

Trust Me, I'm a Dyslexia Therapist
Catrina Hays

Birch

Catrina has taught since the mid 1990s, specializing in teaching students with dyslexia since 2000. She has provided dyslexia training and direct service through her business, Independent Learning Tools, since 2002. Catrina has taught students from age 5 to 18 to read and spell more effectively using the Wilson Reading System in public, private, and alternative school settings. She has trained hundreds of teachers in how to effectively teach reading. Catrina geeks out over how much more we know about the brain now compared with when she started in 1996.

Wanderverse: Quest for The Golden Clock
Steven Duberchin

Michigan A

Wanderverse is a fantasy tabletop roleplaying game in the style of Dungeons & Dragons and now it's a theatrical production as well! In our adventure we promise a unique tale filled with swords and sorcery, crits and giggles, improvised antics, and polyhedral dice. Join our audience and use your smart phone to help us shape a one-of-a-kind tale and become an essential part of the quest. You are invited to come in costumes, bring a beverage (as there will be plenty of toasting), and get ready to roll the dice with your cast of heroes in WANDERVERSE Chapter 1: The Quest for the Golden Clock!

WANDERVERSE began as a tabletop gaming system in 2023 and has grown in popularity in the Chicagoland area. In 2022, the Laugh Out Loud theater of the Chicagoland area contracted the Common Lands to draft a Wanderverse-themed comedy show. Since its inception in February of 2023, WANDERVERSE-Adventures Improvised has sold out just about every show it has had.



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9:00 – Midnight

Fictional Cocktails II (Contemporary Fiction & Urban Fantasy)

Nathaniel Arons

Willow

From shaken martinis to Victory-Gin; from the Flaming Moe to the SlimJim Fiz; since the invention of the cocktail, writers of contemporary fiction have been eager to concoct interesting, exotic or downright bizarre cocktails for their characters to imbibe. Join me for Fictional Cocktails II. In this program we will watch clips, read excerpts and, of course, learn to mix, sample & review several (formerly) fictional drinks from the modern fiction we love most! This is an audience participation event & will only reach full seating if 5 people agree to join my intrepid crew of mixers & servers.

10:00 – Midnight

Social-Deduction Games: Werewolves of WeeM

Stephen Rider

Elm

Are you a werewolf? If not, who is??? Come discover which of your friends is secretly harboring special dietary needs in this classic game of social deduction.

Friday Night Dance with DJ Kenya

Kenya Zarns

Botanic B

Swing by after the costume contest to let loose on the dance floor and have some fun! With a music mix of oldies and current hits, there's something for everyone Note: requests will be accepted but are not guaranteed.

sMart Bar Gathering

Hospitality

This is a "Bring and Share" event. ****21+ Only****

10:30 PM – Late

Rock and Roll Concert/Sing-Along

Tommy Ryan

Birch

Come and rock out/sing with Jedi Master Mensa 2016 Tommy Ryan and Legit Rock Star Brittany Johns! Building off momentum from last year's WeeM and this year's AG, Tommy and Brittany will host a night of music–this time with a full drum kit and an electric guitar! Parts rock show, parts songs by request, and parts live band karaoke, show up ready to dance, sing along, or maybe even grab a mic for one of your favorite tunes!

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Yet another reminder:
Due to the timing for the program book preparation, any late changes to the schedule will be reflected in the "Program At A Glance."

Saturday

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Breakfast

Hospitality

Continental Breakfast Items plus Hot Breakfast … Scrambled Eggs, French Toast Sticks, Tater Rounds, Sausage & Bacon.

Please remember to clean up after yourself. Thank you!

9:00 – 10:15 AM

Strategies for Peak Productivity and Effective Personal Branding

Richard Lanyon

Willow

This session will help unlock participants' full potential through an interactive and dynamic workshop designed to enhance personal productivity, strengthen one's personal brand, and harness organizational tools. Participants can expect to hear actionable insights and hands-on exercises to streamline daily tasks, create a compelling professional presence, and efficiently manage time. Perfect for those seeking to amplify their image, achieve goals, and leave with skills and strategies needed for lasting success.

Turning Your Manuscript Into a Book: Traditional, Small Press, or Self Publishing?

Ian Strock

Birch

You've written a book. Now what? Seek a traditional publisher? Go with a small press? Self-publish? Each offers advantages and disadvantages, potential for great success or abject obscurity. Ian Randal Strock has been an editor and publisher for major houses and small presses, and worked with self-published authors. As an author, he has sold books to major publishers and small publishers, and self-published some of his work. To make an informed decision, you have to have all the information, which he'll offer in this talk.



The choice

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9:00 – 10:15 cont'd.

Gardening for Pollinators
Mark Lyons

Michigan A

A successful vegetable garden requires the actions of specific insects and animals to carry pollen from one plant to another. Without these pollinators, most of our fruit and vegetable crops would fail to produce. To help our garden crops produce bountiful harvests, we must encourage these pollinators to come into our gardens, and Mark Lyons, an experienced garden coach, will show you how.

9:30 – Noon

Logic Problem Tournament
Oriel Maximé

Michigan B

You know the type: 5 people, with 5 different types of cars and 5 different pets, live on the same street... See how you rate against your fellow Mensans on these six, never-before-seen problems: three traditional and three less common. Best solver over the 90 minutes wins accolades and praise!

10:00 – 11:30 AM

Parent/Kid Swim Time
Megan Bratkovich

Michigan B

Are your kids hoping for some swim time with you and other Mensan kids? Now's their chance! All kids must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Peace Corps Experiences in Thailand
Ray Cox

Willow

The Peace Corps is an experience open to US citizens. It is unique to those individuals, the country they are hosted by, the group they train with, and eventually the community they live and work in. There are three goals of Peace Corps: 1) help other countries meet their needs with trained volunteers, 2)help Americans understand other peoples, and 3) help other peoples understand Americans. This presentation is to familiarize you with the Peace Corps Experience, the people and culture of Thailand, and how Peace Corps follows you forever.

is obvious VOTE

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Artificial Intelligence: Promise & Perils

Lance Erlick

Birch

Leading scientific minds have expressed concern about the risks posed by AI. Thanks to recent breakthroughs, many milestones (which experts viewed as decades away only 7 years ago) have now been reached, making experts take seriously the possibility of superintelligence in our lifetime. While some experts still believe human-level AI is centuries away, most researchers at the 2017 Asilomar Conference guessed it could happen before 2060. Come join a discussion of the current state of AI, the promise, myths, threats, and what we should know about changes coming to our world.

ImprovThis: The Three Pillars of Improv

Steven Duberchin

Elm



Do you ever watch Improv live on stage or on TV and wonder "How do they make it all work?" The answer is surprisingly simple; it's the Three Pillars of Improv. In this session, Steve Duberchin from ImprovThis will facilitate a fun workshop where you'll be up and improvising side by side with seasoned improvisers. We'll be exploring the three Pillars of Improv by playing in "games" and "scenes." Prepare to have a lot of fun, think on your feet, and maybe even learn something new!

Otimo! A Week in Southern Portugal

Jennifer Murtoff

Michigan A

Currently a hotspot for tourists, Portugal offers quite a variety of sights! While, yes, this is a glorified look at my vacation pictures, my goal is to offer an opportunity to learn more about this country on the edge of the Iberian Peninsula.

Self-Sufficient Ms: Carry-in & Seed Swap

Lacee Hudec

Hospitality

Pickled, canned, frozen, or foraged... share some of the bounty that you have made with other self-sufficient Ms. If you have (labeled) seeds to share, please bring those as well.

VOTE

WILLIAMS ODUNZE'24

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Noon – 1:30 PM

Lunch Break

Hospitality

BBQ Pulled Pork or Chicken, Artisan White Cheddar Mac & Cheese (V), accompanied by Sides.

As always, make the effort to clean up after yourselves. Please leave the space in better shape than how you found it. (Like life.) Thank you!

12:30 – 2:30 PM

A Capitol Idea: Visiting Every US State Capitol

Alan Baltis

Michigan A

Driving to Bar Harbor for their honeymoon, Colleen and Alan stopped by for a tink and a drink in Montpelier, VT. It was beautiful. Alan said, "This is where every state puts its best foot forward - we should see all of them!" Colleen enthusiastically agreed. In classic "a good idea that got out of hand" fashion, over the course of the last 22 years, they've made it to 48 out of 50, with only Alaska & Hawaii remaining. Along the way they took in National Parks, museums, zoos, galleries, historic sites, oddities, ridiculous roadways. The best of Americana. Please join them for a fun travelogue!

Pub Trivia

Kenya Zarns

Michigan B

Compete for bragging rights and meaningless trinkets in this pub style quiz! Teams of up to 5 people answer questions on a variety of topics in hopes of emerging victorious at the end! NOTE: this quiz is mostly harmless, but there may be some mature content.PLEASE arrive 10-15 minutes before start time to get registered (one smartphone per team required to play). This is pub trivia, so bring your beverage of choice with you. No children under 13, please.

1:00 – 2:15 PM

Financial Crime Protection for Senior Citizens

John Good

Willow

It's estimated that in 2023, seniors were the victims of numerous financial crimes. Sadly, these seniors lost an estimated $1.2 billon and In many of these cases, these victims will never get their money back, losing their life savings. This highly interactive 75 minute presentation will cover a number of these scams, in an effort to prevent audience members from being victims themselves. Your presenter, John Good, will cover the techniques offenders often use in an easy to follow PowerPoint presentation. Questions from audience members are highly encouraged.

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1:00 – 2:15 cont'd.

Just Because I'm Smart, Do I Have to be Scary?
Claudia Pitts

Birch

In this workshop, we will explore the common perception that intelligence can sometimes come across as intimidating, and how highly intelligent individuals can foster more effective, approachable communication. We will share practical strategies for connecting with others in a way that bridges the gap between intellect and emotional understanding, ensuring that knowledge becomes a tool for collaboration rather than intimidation. Whether you're a leader, educator, or simply curious about improving communication, this talk will provide valuable insights into balancing intellect with empathy.

I'll Turn This Car Around!
Kathryn Queeney

Elm

Family road trips can be absolute nightmares for dysfunctional families. If you can relate, and are interested in taking the wheel yourself, come join some fellow travelers as we discuss the challenges of healing from childhood trauma. In consideration of potentially sensitive topics that may come up, this session is limited to those 18 and over.

Kids Halloween Craft
Megan Bratkovich

Maple

A fun Halloween-themed craft for kids

2:30 – 3:45 PM

Residential Solar: An Introduction
Mike McInerney

Willow

Solar panels are appearing on virtually every rooftop. Are you considering "going solar" or do you simply want to learn more? The presentation will cover residential solar system design considerations, components, and costs. Three examples of residential systems will be provided.

The Garden of Doom
Mark Lyons

Birch

Certain plants look beautiful, but hold hidden dangers that should make you think twice about planting them. Mark Lyons, an experienced garden coach, will alert you to these botanical rogues and how to carefully cultivate them to mitigate their hazards if you decide to plant them.

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2:30 – 3:45 cont'd.

Singing at the Bedside
Penelope Salinger

Elm

Kindness Made Audible is the motto of the Threshold Choir, an international volunteer organization founded to sing at the bedsides of those at the end of life or dealing with severe health issues. Several members of a local chapter will join Penelope in sharing about the principles of singing for the purpose of bringing comfort to a loved one, We will also give participants the experience of being sung to in this manner -- a cappella 3-part harmony, with a blend reminiscent of angels.

2:30 – 3:45 cont'd.

Improv Comedy Show: The BlueBs
Steve Duberchin

Michigan A

Join us as we present an improvised comedy about everything and anything. Maybe we'll do a long form montage or maybe we'll end up putting together a running order of short form "games". We just never know what we'll be doing until we get on stage. We'll use your suggestions to improvise scenes that will have you thinking, laughing, and maybe even groaning. This will be a unique performance as these scenes have never been preformed before and most likely will never be performed again. Crazy Shades Of Blue and Queen Bs are Improv Comedy troupes who perform often in and around Chicago.

ImprovThis!
Fun. Learn. Connect.

Human Hungry Hungry Hippos
Heather Booton

Botanic B

It's back! Join us for this life-sized version of the popular game. Teams of 3+ will compete to see who can collect the most balls each round. This event is definitely kid-friendly. Come with lots of energy for this fast-paced and action-filled game. Spectators are welcome. All participants will need to sign a waiver or have one signed by their guardian.

So Long, Sucker!
Matt Crawford

Michigan B

This is a game of strategy and negotiation designed by John Nash (he of *A Beautiful Mind*) and his friends. They had ruder names for it, as well as this one. It takes about ten minutes to learn and maybe fifteen to play, so experience is not required. If needed, a copy of the game will be available to try out before the tournament.

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4:00 – 5:15 PM

Blind Tasting—or, So You Wanna Be A Sommelier?

Catrina Hays

Willow

We will be tasting one white and three red wines BLIND— meaning we won't know what we are tasting. See if you can match the description to the wine you tasted. Prize will be awarded to the person who matches the most wines to their description. Come with your olfactory and gustatory systems primed! *40 attendees max*. **This program is for those 21+**

4:00 – 5:15 CONT'D

Travel to Extreme Latitudes: The North and South Geographic Poles

Ken Levine

Birch

Learn about the experiences of traveling to the most remote places on Earth. Learn some history of the early explorers and their attempts to reach these locations. Everyone's experience may differ After this lecture and after all questions and answers, time permitting, there might be a short presentation of Penguins of the Antarctic.

Your Climate Solution

Mark Ailes

Michigan A

The En-Roads Climate Simulator is an interactive tool for testing different strategies to solve the climate crisis. Participants will get to choose, predict, and test solutions.

4:00 – 6:00 PM

Kids Lego Time

Megan Bratkovich

Elm

Do your kids like building with Lego bricks? Here's some time for them to do so with other kids.

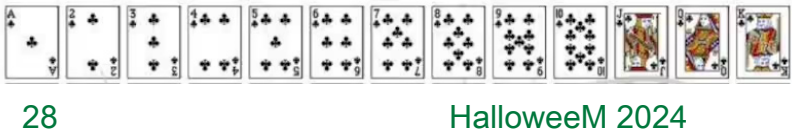
4:30 – 6:30 PM

Poker Tournament

Scott Bialas

Michigan B

Join us for an exciting poker tournament at WeeM! This friendly competition will test not only your card-playing skills but also your strategic thinking and quick decision-making. Whether you're a seasoned poker player or a novice, this is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy some light-hearted fun with fellow Mensa members. Expect challenging hands, great conversations, and a chance to showcase your poker face. There will be prizes!



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6:00 – 7:30 PM

Dinner Break

Like the last several years, there will be no dinner served tonight, though light snacks will be available. Ask a local for suggestions.

7:30 – 9:30 PM

The Epicurean Experience

Hieu Nguyen and John Bradford

Hospitality (Ravinia C/D)

We'll have an all-new variety of thematic, diverse, and sometimes bizarre foods and non-alcoholic drinks to explore. Take a nibble of things you've never seen and/or heard of before...or perhaps you are familiar with, but were reluctant to try. This event is ALCOHOL FREE, so anyone not wearing an "under 21" badge should visit before partaking of Pretentious Drinking. Please note: we aren't serving a meal, just samples and sips, so come for curiosity, not dinner.

8:30 – 10:00 PM

Pretentious Drinking **(21 and older)**

Alan Baltis

Botanic Ballroom

Liqueurs. The fancy stuff. Polished, cosmopolitan, perhaps even a bit snooty. You'd like to know more but are too sensible to plunk down the price of an unknown beverage. Rejoice! As in years past, you can sample some truly amazing liqueurs—and your money's no good. Unlike years past, however, we will be making a few small changes for the sake of safety, chiefly related to cup handling. So come on by and sample our weird and wonderful distillates and decoctions from around the world. You can determine which you'd like to own, which should be left on the store shelf, and which you should give to your arch-nemesis as a "thoughtful" gift. Obviously, you must be of legal drinking age to join us, and valid proof of pretentiousness may be required. Snobby accents and extended pinkies remain optional.

PLEASE NOTE: The alcohol in Pretentious Drinking **MUST** remain in Botanic Ballroom. Please help us maintain our wonderful relationship with the hotel. Thank you.

9:00 – Late

Social-Deduction Games: Friends of Lawrence (Werewolves of WeeM)

Stephen Rider

Elm

Saturday Night Dance

Ed Barta

Botanic Ballroom

Music. Drinks. Old friends. New friends. Soon-to-be friends. What's not to like?

A great end to a beautiful day, or a great beginning to a beautiful night!

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Sunday

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Breakfast
Hospitality

Continental Breakfast Items plus Hot Breakfast … Scrambled Eggs, French Toast Sticks, Tater Rounds, Sausage & Bacon.

9:30 - 11:00 AM

Amazing Race - WeeM Style
Jill Sackett

Michigan B

Need some help in recovering from your Saturday night revelry? Join us for an Amazing Race for Mensans! Based on the popular TV show, teams of 2-4 competitors complete a variety of tasks, some cerebral, some lighthearted, on their way to the final "Pit Stop" and victors' bragging rights. Our version is designed for all ages and activity levels. Please sign up in advance to facilitate our planning. Not on a team? No problem; we'll get you on one. Don't miss out on one of the most entertaining events of the weekend!

10:00 – 11:00 AM

CAM ExComm Business Meeting
Michigan A

In order to best serve the people that elected us, we meet regularly, discuss things, vote on things, and decide things, always emphasizing and advancing the common good. All CAM members welcome.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Awards and Announcements
Hosted by Heather Booton & Peter DuDeck

Hospitality (Ravinia C/D)

Find out who did and won what this weekend.

2:00 – 4:30 PM

Proctored Tests
Willow

Not a member yet? Here's your chance to qualify.

12:30 PM – Later

Anyone with time to spare?
Just about everywhere

What a trip! Time to clean up. Please pitch in and give us a hand. If you volunteer, you ***may*** go home with some unused food or beverages, but you will ***definitely*** go home with our thanks, and a collectable volunteer pin.

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Presenter Biographies

Mark Ailes

Your Climate Solution (Sat.)

Mark is a retired High School Physics Teacher, Science Olympiad Coach and bicyclist, as well as a 7-yr. member of Citizens Climate Lobby. CCL is a nonpartisan volunteer organization working to build the political will to solve the climate change problem.

Nathaniel Arons

Fictional Cocktails year-1: Fantasy! (Fri.)

Nathaniel L. Arons is a former chef, former disaster relief worker, former TTG-designer & entrepreneur and was once upon a time in the top 100 H.S. Chess players in IL. Nat is currently an EMT who provides on-site medical care at Media Productions, Cons, BJJ Tournaments and sporting events. In his spare time, when he isn't reading nerdy books or watching nerdier TV-shows/movies, Nat mixes drinks. Trying to combine these hobbies into a single WeeM event has become his yearly fall tradition.

Cookie Bakke

So You Want To Be An Investigator? (Fri.)

Cookie is an actively licensed Private Investigator, global speaker/instructor/investigative journalist, expert witness and victim advocate with an emphasis on crime and fraud. She's a mixture of Columbo, Magnum PI and Monk -- with a heavy sprinkling of Remington Steele. Her experience ranges from cold case homicides, to deadly romance scams, to organized crime, to insurance/financial schemes.

Kim Bakke

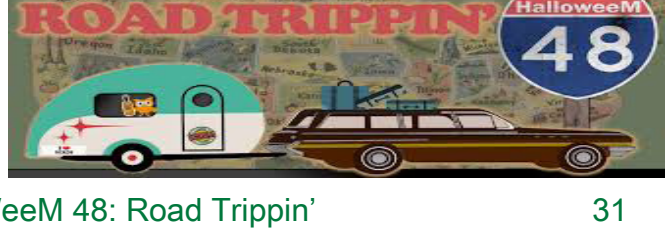
Gen Y Meet and Greet (Fri.)

Kim Bakke has been a member of Mensa since she was 3 years old. After working on the Las Vegas strip as a fine dining pastry chef for 10 years, she now teaches Culinary Arts at a CTE Magnet high school. You can usually find her at most Gen Y events. In her (small amount of) free time, she enjoys cooking, gardening, or hanging out with her dog.

Alan Baltis

A Capitol Idea: Visiting Every US State Capitol & Pretentious Drinking (Sat.)

Colleen and Alan Baltis are music lovers, game players, puzzle solvers, movie buffs, fans of stand-up comedy, live music and theater. These hikers & travelers have been to 48/50 state capitols and dozens of National Parks, museums, zoos, and oddities. They're both 40+-year members of Mensa (where they met), happily retired and traveling more than ever. Email them at alanbaltis@gmail.com or colleenbaltis@gmail.com, or friend him on Facebook and social media. Check out the Relentless Geekery podcast!



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Scott Bialas

Poker Tournament (Sat.)

Kendall County Deputy by day, Christmas light designer by night. A loving husband to Emily and proud father of two teenage boys. An avid poker player on the weekends. This is the second year of hosting the poker tournament.

Heather Booton

Trust Me, I'm An Event Planner (Fri.) & Human Hungry Hungry Hippos (Sat.)

Heather is your fearless WeeM Chair who remains convinced that no one actually reads these bios, so why not make stuff up? Heather spent 3 years doing close-up research with hippos in the Okavango Delta. As the sole survivor of the in-water team of 20 researchers, Heather realized how very, very hungry hippos could be, and then dedicated her life to playing this game as a way of educating the general population and as a tribute to her fallen comrades.

EJ Boris

The State of Shapes; or rather, The Shape of States (Fri.)

Filled with a variety of fascinating and utter useless information. Speaker at Hyde Park, London; Red Square, Moscow; Tienanmen Square, Beijing; and The Domain, Sydney. Best Actor award. Can sing five national anthems and hum three more. (Really, does it matter, as long the program sounds good, and is entertaining?)

John Bradford

HalloweeM Paint-a-Pumpkin-Palooza (Thur.) & Sushi Go! Battle (Fri.)

Librarian, author, artist, mutant, and member of several secret societies, including a Klingon cat appreciation group.

Megan Bratkovich

Kids Lego Time (Sat.), Parent/Kid Swim Time (Fri. & Sat), Kids Halloween Craft (Sat),

Megan Bratkovich has been a member of Chicago Area Mensa since 2011, and is the parent of two young children (potential future Mensans?). She is also the Kids Programming Chair at WeeM this year.

Roger Breisch

Seeing Another Way (Fri.)

This will be Roger's 3rd appearance at WeeM. Obviously he has not yet worn out his welcome...but he's still trying! Roger has led a very eclectic life...from teacher, to corporate executive, Chamber of Commerce Director to community volunteer. Along the way perhaps he has learned a thing or two. We'll see!

Jason Brooks

Clandestine - Strategy Game Preview (Fri.)

Jason Brooks (Brookspun Games) has designed and published tabletop games for the past few years with his first game - Legacies - successfully funding on Kickstarter and sold out of its first print run. Clandestine is live on Kickstarter NOW. https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/brookspungames/clandestine-4.

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Stella Bryant

Taoist Tai Chi Demonstration (Fri.)

Stella is a Taoist Tai Chi Instructor.

Casey Carraher

Trust Me, I'm a Crisis Behavioral Interventionist (Fri.)

Casey J. Carraher is a human services professional, specializing in proactive and reactive behavioral interventions for people with autism and other disabilities. With over 20 years of service, Casey teaches others how to access deep empathy for some of the most troublesome behavioral situations out there. He believes that with just a few important pieces of information, anyone has the ability to do the same.

Ray Cox

Peace Corps Experiences in Thailand (Sat.)

Ray is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, having served in the Forestry Extension program in Thailand from 1992 to 1994. The Peace Corps is life changing while most people are "in country." For some, like Ray, it continued in various ways. His 28 year career in education was fostered with a Peace Corps Fellowship at De Paul University. He also met Marcy, his wife, at a post-Peace Corps event and they built a family together.

Matt Crawford

Coffee with the AMC (Fri.), & So Long, Sucker! (Sat.)

Matt Crawford is the Region Vice Chair for the North Central Region. He is also a long-time collector and player of strategy games and a physicist. He retired from Fermilab nearly five years ago.

Steve Davidson

Costume Parade (Fri.)

Steve Davidson is a long-time member and prior emcee for the costume parade.

Andrea Donovan

Senior Living Myths Unmasked - Separating Fact From Fiction (Fri.)

Andrea Donovan is the President of Andrea Donovan Senior Living Advisors, a geriatric care management firm that she launched in 2006. She holds the designation of Care Manager Certified, conferred upon her by the National Academy of Certified Care Managers. Since 2006, Andrea has devoted more than 5000 hours to researching, touring and evaluating over 500 senior living communities in the Chicago metropolitan area. Education: B.A., St. Mary's College Notre Dame; M.B.A. Loyola University.

Yet another reminder:
Due to the timing for the program book preparation, any late changes to the schedule will be reflected in the "Program At A Glance."

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Steve Duberchin (The BlueBs)

Wanderverse: Quest for The Golden Clock (Fri.), & Improv Comedy Show: The BlueBs (Sat.)

The Queen Bs and Crazy Shades of Blue are combining forces again this year to bring you the improv stylings of The BlueBs. Together we have almost a century of combined improv performance experience and our players have been seen at almost every major improv venue in the Chicago area. If that's not enough to prove we're talented in our craft, at least it shows we're tenacious.

WANDERVERSE began as a tabletop gaming system in 2023 and has grown in popularity in the Chicagoland area. In 2022, the Laugh Out Loud theater of the Chicagoland area contracted the Common Lands to draft a Wanderverse-themed comedy show. Since its inception in February of 2023, WANDERVERSE-Adventures Improvised has sold out just about every show it has had.

Lance Erlick

Artificial Intelligence Promise & Perils (Sat.)

As the author of the Android Chronicles trilogy, about an advanced android with artificial intelligence who rebels against her creator, science fiction writer Lance Erlick has researched, written, and presented about AI since 2017. He worked with computers and programming since he was 18, and watched capabilities grow exponentially in spurts and pauses since. Other than AI, Mr. Erlick has published a variety of science fiction pieces about challenging issues facing our world.

Thomas Galanis

M-etaphysical SIG Meet Up (Fri.)

Tommy and Kelly Galanis are soulmates, twin flames, and a power couple who enjoy learning and discovering all things that fascinate and bring wonder. Highly in tune with premonition, sensation, and higher power, they have focused their energies on intuition and empathy to help guide others with finding their destined path. They love to play and enjoy board and video games, acting, baking, learning, and discovering together, and they have done this for their entire 25+ years together.

John Good

Financial Crime Protection for Senior Citizens (Sat.)

John G. Good is president of JG Good Corporation, a security consulting firm, located in Schaumburg, Illinois. Mr. Good retired from Law Enforcement in February of 2020, completing a 41 year career. John served in a number of specialized units during his career, winning him a series of department commendations and the distinguished public servant of the year award in 1986. Mr. Good holds a Masters of Arts Degree in Law Enforcement Administration from Western Illinois University.

Don Grayson

Spy School (Fri.)

BS Physics '54, MS engineer '72. Purdue. Thirty-year career as civilian engineer for the U.S. Navy in engineering management at Naval Avionics Center, Indianapolis. Assignments include U.S. NATO rep to Sweden, classified courier, project manager, and technical analysis to various military radar & weapons guidance systems. Sailboat hobbyist.

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Jon Gruebele

HELL's M's Invades the Baltics, or, Where the Heck is Estonia Anyway? (Fri.)

Jon serves as First Vice Chair on the American Mensa Board of Directors (AMC). He was Regional Vice Chair 4 from 2017 to 2024. Jon is a former LocSec and recipient of the National Chairman's Service Award (2018), National Certificate of Appreciation (2021), and National Service Award (2024). He's been a proctor since 2010, testing over 200 candidates. He's co-chaired AGOG twice. Professionally, he's managed large teams of IT professionals and is certified at process and quality improvement.

Karen Gruebele

AG 2025 Preview (Thur.)

CAM Treasurer and 2025 AG Co-chair. I believe volunteering has made my Mensa membership worth more, and has given me the opportunity to meet some wonderful people!

Catrina Hays

Trust Me, I'm a Dyslexia Therapist (Fri.) & Blind Tasting—or So You Wanna be a Sommelier? (Sat.)

Catrina Hays, director of Independent Learning Tools, has spent over two decades teaching students and educators. She got her undergraduate education in Learning Disabiities from Northwestern University and her Master's in Special Education from the University of Arizona. Catrina has also participated in well over 1000 evaluations with neuropsychologists to identify learning issues. Passionate about her students, she never ceases to be in awe of their persistence in the face of challenge.

Catrina also has a special interest in oenology as well as craft beers for a number of years. It dovetails into her interest in cooking and pairing food with beer and wine. Catrina is not a Sommelier or a Cicerone - just a person who loves to delve into interesting tastes

Lacee Hudec

FroMMMage Cheese Swap (Bring and Share) (Fri.) & Self-Sufficient Ms: Carry-in & Seed Swap (Sat.)

Lacee is an avid gardener, baker, bagpiper/tenor drummer, serial volunteer, and busy mom of two M kids. Sometimes these things align to create exciting ventures, and sometimes they pull her in opposite directions. In either case, life is never boring.

Richard Lanyon

Metro Chicago Water Systems, Ensuring Healthy and Sustainable Resources (Sat.)

Former Executive Director of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Professional Engineer, author of four books, speaker, urban water historian and specialist, former member of the Evanston City Council and Evanston Library Board, former chair of the Evanston Utilities Commission, appointed to the National Association of Clean Water Agencies Hall of Fame.

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Bette Lawrence-Water

Strategies for Peak Productivity and Effective Personal Branding (Sat.)

Bette Lawrence-Water is a Public Health Lecturer at Benedictine University, and Principal Consultant at Spectrum Strategic Solutions. She is a sought-after speaker and trainer, specializing in leadership, interpersonal communication, and personal development. She has received recognition and many awards for her work, and serves on several boards and councils. She holds a BS in Management, MS in Leadership, and has completed Ph.D. credits in Organizational Leadership Change Management.

Kenneth Levine

Travel to Extreme Latitudes: The North and South Geographic Poles (Sat.)

Ken has been to over 80 countries on all 7 continents, including four trips to Antarctica. He has been above the Arctic circle 4 times and below the Antarctic circle twice. He has an extensive library about polar explorers and has visited museums and polar exhibits in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Norway, Argentina, Chile, Australia and New Zealand. He wants to share his experiences in being a tourist at the most extreme latitudes.

Robert Little

Costume Parade (Fri.)

Robert Little is known for doing amazing things with a guitar.

Mark Lyons

The Garden of Doom & Gardening for Pollinators (Sat.)

Mark Lyons, a.k.a. “The Garden Troubadour,” is a master gardener, consultant, and educator. He has been gardening since he was 10 years old. Today, Mark runs Green Thumb at Your Service, dedicated to inspiring and coaching people on growing their own food. Based in Palatine, IL, Mark travels around the country to deliver dynamic presentations on vegetable and mushroom gardening, harvest preservation, and home cheesemaking.

Margie Martinson

The Isle Where Fairies Still Roam (Fri.)

Professional Dungeon Master and former Naturalist. Member of the Chicago, the North American, and the the World societies for people from the Isle of Man.

Oriel Maximé

Logic Problem Tournament (Sat.)

Oriel Maxime is a general-purpose STEM-y Mensan. He is a published Logic Problem creator, and has run this WeeM tournament for more than two decades.

Your final (‘til next year) reminder:
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Mike McInerney

Choose a Travelogue (or two, or three, …) (Fri.) & Residential Solar: An Introduction (Sat.)

Mike McInerney is a research electrical/electronics engineer and is a professionally licensed electrical engineer in Illinois. Mike has decades of experience working with residential electrical systems. Mike has begun creating photojournal videos of his and DD's travels. Some of the locations are in Alaska, Scotland, and Türkiye.

Jennifer Morris

Whisk(e)y Tasting Adventure - Buckle Up! (Thur.)

Jenn (she/her) has visited numerous distilleries across Scotland and Kentucky as well as attended whisky festivals in England and Massachusetts. During her travels, she frequents whisky-focused bars learning from locals and soaking up the culture, often with a side of haggis. While Jenn's tastes center on Scotland's Speyside region and meander into the Highlands, she looks forward to visiting Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides on future visits.

Jennifer Murtoff

Otimo! A Week in Southern Portugal (Sat.)

Jennifer Murtoff is a freelance editor, writer, and translator who's thoroughly enjoyed travel since a trip to Spain in 1993. Her travel was nearly curtailed by injuries to her brain and upper cervical spine in 2019, but she's back at it! Her travel profile includes Belgium, Belize, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, England, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Nicaragua, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Spain.

Claudia Pitts

Just Because I'm Smart, Do I Have to be Scary? (Sat.)

Claudia Pitts, PhD, is a clinical psychologist specializing in the treatment of anxiety and depression for individuals and couples. She also supports families and individuals navigating life transitions, interpersonal communication challenges, grief, and loss. In addition to her clinical work, she serves as an associate professor at National Louis University in Chicago, where she chairs the Master's in Psychology program.

Dan Punzak

Near-Death Experiences (Fri.)

50-year member and Life Member. LocSec, Sangamon Valley Mensa.

Kathryn Queeney

I'll Turn This Car Around! (Sat.)

Hi I'm Kathryn, and I'm an adult child of an alcoholic and dysfunctional family. I have spent several years working on my recovery, and I love sharing my experience, strength, and hope with others.

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Erica Reckamp

Job Search Like a Pro — Résumés (Fri.)

Erica serves as Executive Resume Writer and Job Search Advisor for The Captivators and Job Search Like a Pro. Earlier roles include Head/Senior Writer for global outplacement and career transition firm CGC, Empowered Possibilities, and EQ-IQ Coaching. Erica has been featured in “Forbes,” “LinkedIn News,” Career Sherpa,” and on JobMob’s global list of Top 25 Job Search Articles. Erica also currently serves on Advisory Boards with Yoodli and Jobright AI.

Allison Reeves

AG 2025 Preview (Thur.)

Allison and Karen are the AG Co-Chairs for the 2025 AG to be held in Chicago.

Tommy Ryan

Rock and Roll Concert/Sing-Along & Nerdy Yoga with Jedi Master Mensa (Fri.)

Tommy is a trained singer/musician. He has played at many Mensa events, in pubs, and at other venues all over the world. Brittany is a singer/drummer for multiple bands in Milwaukee and a winner of karaoke competitions. Registered Yoga Teacher Tommy has been teaching regularly for the past 3 years, expanding his knowledge of yoga with consistent learning. He has taught yoga at Mensa events including AGs and last year’s WeeM.

Jill Sackett

Amazing Race - WeeM Style (Sun.)

Jill is an Amazing Race fan, avid gamer, and occasional event-planner celebrating her 11-year anniversary of planning these whimsical and cerebral challenges for her fellow Mensans, with devious input from former contestants. She is joined by a terrific team of fellow Amazing Race fans to help execute this annual event.

Penelope Salinger

Singing at the Bedside (Sat.)

LCSW and singer/songwriter, Penelope has been singing with the Santa Barbara Threshold Singers since 2007 and now serves as director for the chapter. She has composed several pieces for the repertoire and facilitates Regional Gatherings across the US.

Tom Schnorrenberg

Gen X Ms Meet and Greet (Fri.)

Tom Schnrorenberg is the Gen X M’s SIG Coordinator. He’s been an active member of Mensa since 2000, and currently serves as Assistant Local Secretary of Boston Mensa. He’s congregated with his Mensa family at many an AG and Mind Games over the years, and is always on the lookout for good wee drams, pints, and fine Ethiopian cuisine wherever he travels.



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Robert Stalzer

Costume Parade Emcee (Fri.)

Robert recently started his 40th yearin Mensa - something keeps him coming back.

Ian Strock

Turning Your Manuscript Into a Book: Traditional, Small Press, or Self Publishing? (Sat.)

Ian Randal Strock is the editor and publisher of Fantastic Books/Gray Rabbit Publications, as well as a freelance editor working with self-published authors. Previously, he was an editor with some of the biggest publishers in the business. As a writer, he has had books published by Random House, Carrel Books, and some small presses, and he's made some forays into self-publishing. Having nothing to do with publishing, he served on the AMC for more than 7 years.

Glenn Sutton

7 Wonders Tournament (Thur.) It's a Wonderful World Tournament (Fri.)

Glenn Sutton is an Agile Coach, Project Manager, Scrum Master, IT Programmer, and a member of Toastmasters to boot! He has run tournaments for over twenty years, ranging from CCGs to board-games to even VR events, including the "7 Wonders" tournaments for over a decade here at WeeM.

Tara Travia

Forgiveness Pressure (Fri.)

Dr. Travia has been treating complex trauma for over 15 years using ACT and EMDR in a variety of settings with driven, gifted individuals. Dr. Travia is a Third Wave, strength-based, Licensed Psychologist, EMDR Certified Clinician and Approved Consultant, continuing education provider, and authorized to practice Interjurisdictional Telepsychology. When she isn't treating, teaching, or writing, she is diving, socializing, or making art.

Natasha Walker

Sound Bath Meditation (Fri.)

Natasha is a lifetime Mensa member and discovered the benefits of sound healing this year. She found it so life changing that she has been leaning into healing modalities and is certified in sound healing.

Beth Weiss

HELL's M's Meeting (Fri.)

Beth Weiss is the Coordinator of HELL's M's, the Party SIG of American Mensa. She and her husband Stan host Pretentious Cellars in the basement of the Weiss Ward Home for Wayward Mensans.

Kenya Zarns

Pub Trivia (Sat.) & Friday Night Dance (Fri.)

Kenya is an experienced mobile DJ, with a side career that started promisingly many years ago before spiraling down to DJ'ing Mensa dances.She is eminently and definitively unqualified to host pub trivia, but the National Office let her run CultureQuest, so we said what the hell. Try to humor her; it makes her smile.

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HalloweeM 47

is brought to you, with pleasure, by
Chicago Area Mensa's **WeeM TeaM**

WeeM Chair, Hotel Liaison ..... Heather Booton
Program Chair.....Beth Weiss
Hospitality Chairs . Susan Woodill, Rhonda Peek
Hospitality Minion..... Lora Mitchell
Beverages & Program Book.....Dave Gudjonis
Beverages Co-Chair.....Ben Peek
Game Warden .....Ed Barta
Volunteer Coordinator.....Catrina Hays
Vendor Coordinator..... Rae Goodman
Registrars ..... Lynn Collier,Theo Sparks
On-site Registrar ..... Elizabeth Weihert
Treasurer.....Allison Reeves
Tournaments Coordinator ..... Glenn Sutton
Book Sale..... Teresa Tucker & Robert Little
AV Chairs ..... Damian Christianson,
Peter DuDeck, & Art Sparks
White Hats Coordinator, Decorations..Karen Gruebele
Photographer ..... John Muellner
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Awards Chair.....Teresa Tucker
Logo, Pins ... .Casey Carraher
Pretentious Drinking.....Alan Baltis
Logistics .....Laceé Hudec
Costume Contest MC .....Robert Stalzer
Room and Ride Matching ..... Kris Petzinger
Epicurean Experience.....Hieu Nguyen
& John Bradford
Kid's Programs..... Megan Bratkovich
Social Deduction Games.....Stephen Rider
CAM LocSec.....Peter DuDeck

These are the people who will be wearing green badges. Please express any concerns, problems, or offers of thanks to them.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Very Special Thanks to:

fellow Mensan **Janice Ferri Esser** for her generous donation to Pretentious Drinking. Here's to you, Janice!