
49
CHICAGO AREA MENSA
WEEM 2025
hip to be 7²

49ERS

Notes from Heather Booton, HalloweeM Chair



Welcome to HalloweeM 49 – It's Hip to be (7) Squared!

Where we're going, we don't need roads, because the party is happening right here at the Westin! You've just stepped into the raddest RG this side of 1985, and we're stoked you're here to hang with us for a weekend of totally awesome fun, far-out friends, and righteous vibes.

This bash wouldn't be possible without our most excellent WeeM TeaM. These gnarly folks have been working their leg warmers off to make sure everything is totally radical for you. You'll spot them rocking light green badges and WeeM TeaM ribbons, so give 'em a high five or a "thanks, dude (or dudette)!" when you see them.

Keep your eyes peeled for our White Hat crew. They're the chill crew making sure everything stays cool and copacetic. They'll be checking badges, keeping the party safe, and helping out if anything gets bogus. Look for the white hats should you have questions or need any help.

Big props to all our volunteer homeboys and homegirls who've already signed up to lend a hand. You're the real MVPs of this jam! If you haven't signed up yet, don't be a square—scan a QR code at registration or in the program book, or track down our volunteer coordinator, Cat Sterrett, to get in on the action.

So grab your Walkman, throw on your best neon threads and charm bracelet, and get ready to party like it's 1989. Whether you're a WeeM veteran or a first-time flyer, we're psyched to spend this totally tubular weekend with you.

And remember:

"Be excellent to each other." – Bill & Ted

Heather Booton, 2025 HallweeM Chair

Notes from the Program Chair

Welcome, friends, to WeeM 2025, where we've proven the theorem: It's hip to be 7 squared!

Prepare to calculate your own adventure. As you integrate yourself into the weekend, you will find we have engineered the program to be a function of maximum engagement. The sum of our sessions is exponentially greater than the available hours, a deliberate calculation on our part. We've set up parallel tracks, introduced fascinating variables, and removed the limits on learning. You'll likely wish you could find the derivative of yourself to be in multiple places at once. That's by design! We want you to multiply your possibilities and derive the perfect formula for your personal WeeM experience. What is the common denominator? A weekend of infinite fun.

Of course, even the most elegant proofs have variables. Consider this booklet your foundational axiom, but for the real-time derivative of our schedule, your essential tool is the Program at a Glance (PAAG). Your daily PAAG, available for review at the registration desk, is your constant. (We encourage everyone to download the PAAG daily.) For elegant solutions to last-minute session shifts or room changes, the digital PAAG is your dynamic function. An exponential amount of thanks goes to our brilliant behind-the-scenes problem-solvers who integrated the hyperlinks to make the digital guide a model of efficiency. https://bit.ly/2025PAAG

We also value your acute observations! Our speakers appreciate your feedback, so please share your thoughts via the speaker survey. An e-version will be available for you to prove your points.

This weekend is more than a simple gathering; it's an opportunity to connect with those who just get your oblique sense of humor. Behind every session is a passionate speaker, and we are deeply grateful for their expertise. They are the catalysts for the incredible reactions that happen here. And behind the entire event are our stellar program organizers, whose dedication and teamwork turned a complex equation into this elegant reality.



So, what is the limit of your curiosity? Will you explore new topics at right angles, make some obtuse observations, or laugh to infinity? I encourage you to explore every function of this weekend. Dive in, find your unknown, and solve for Y "Your best WeeM ever!" We're so glad you're part of the solution!

Marty Jalove, 2025 WeeM Programming Chair

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://bit.ly/2025PAAG Some events are age-restricted (usually 21+), and you may be asked to show proof of age. We encourage everyone to download the PAAG daily. 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.

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 White Hats. 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: All meals must be consumed in hospitality. Alcohol must be consumed in the room where it is served. Water coolers are available in all the speaker rooms, should you become parched. It is recommended that you carry a reusable water bottle to cut down on plastic waste.

And friends, please, clean up after yourselves! Just like life: strive to leave the table in a better state 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.

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_2025) 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.

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 colored 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...

WeeM Lo

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 $30/day ($75 for Fri-Sun). 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.

Tournaments

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.

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 rejoins 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.

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.



All Weekend

and Games

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 p.m. and Logic Tournaments at 10 a.m. on Saturday. Please note: the Axe-Pong tournament has been cancelled until all of the needed prosthetics are obtained.

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 **Bernie's Book Bank**.

More info on this worthy non-profit can be found at berniesbookbank.org

Alcohol-related programs

This year we have three alcohol-related programs: Jenn's Whisky Tasting on Thursday, Catrina's Wine & cheese on Friday, and Lora's Wine Tasting on Saturday. 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 policy does NOT affect attendance at Pretentious Drinking, which, as always, is open to all WeeM attendees 21 or older.

Please bring a gov't. issued photo ID and be prepared to show it, per our hotel contract.

Alcohol will **NOT** be available all night. Exact times will vary, but generally, alcohol will be unavailable in hospitality between 2:00 AM and 10 AM.

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 for reference 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 later, 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 – 7:30 PM

Name That Tune Music Trivia

Heidi Conde

Willow

Come test your musical memory at a fun session of 'Name That Tune' Music Trivia! You will hear music from several genres, spanning many decades, with a special focus on tunes from the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Can you remember the singer or band? The songwriter, composer, or lyricist? The name of the song or piece? Bring a team of up to six people, or form a team at the event.

7:00 – 8:15 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!

7:00 – 8:30 PM



Dinner

Hospitality

Catered by Lou Malnati's – A selection of Lou's deep dish and thin crust pizzas, accompanied by salad and pasta.

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

7:30 – 8:45 PM

Music Bingo with Dr. Diva
Kelly Galanis

Willow

Love music? Bingo? Fun? Come join us for a new twist on the classic game of Bingo! In music bingo, we swap numbers for song titles, creating an interactive experience for music lovers. You'll hear a wide variety of songs with a common theme. Mark your space if that song appears on your card. The best part is: cheating is totally allowed! Use Shazam, ask friends, and resort to whatever means necessary to identify the song, and the first one to call BINGO wins!

Your Elevator Pitch vs Your Cocktail Speech
Marty Jalove

Birch

Discover the difference between an Elevator Pitch and a Cocktail Chat. An Elevator Pitch is a concise, impactful presentation designed to spark interest and establish credibility, leaving the listener wanting more. A Cocktail Chat, on the other hand, uses engaging small talk to intrigue and connect. Both serve unique purposes, helping you stand out, control your narrative, and get noticed. Whether job hunting, networking, or aiming to be memorable, learn what to say, how to say it, and why it matters!

Debate Room
William Richmond

Elm

Debate Room is a moderated roundtable where anyone can speak without being interrupted. Our topics will include: Ghosts: What experiences have you had? Cryptids: Bigfoot, Mothman, Chupacabra. Are they real? What rights should these creatures have if they do exist? The Fermi Paradox: There are many Sun-like stars, suggesting that alien civilizations should exist. Why then has there been no contact? Or has there? Death and Property Values: A death in a house can decrease property values by up to 25%. Is this fair? Should states be required to disclose deaths on a property? This program will be repeated Friday and Saturday, same time, same room.

9:00 – 10:15 PM

The Art of Getting Others to Open Their Minds
Marty Jalove

Birch

Stuck in conversations where understanding feels impossible? Navigating closed minds, egos, and irrational arguments can be exhausting. Whether it's office politics, family disagreements, or heated debates, mastering the art of opening minds is invaluable. This session explores ethical negotiation and 7 principles of influence, not to persuade, but to connect. Discover practical tools to foster understanding, build relationships, and spark change through meaningful conversations. Find the common ground where collaboration thrives.

9:00 – 11:00 PM

Scotch Whisky (Tasting) across the 80s!

Jennifer Morris

Michigan B

From the 1780s illicit distilling, to the 1880s Scotch whisky boom, onto the 1980s prevalence of single malt, followed by our modern era of diverse production - Scotch whisky distilleries continue to keep to tradition while modernizing their operations. Come learn (AND TASTE!) how these updates and technological advancements (even AI!) have impacted the whisky-making process. **21+ / Capacity limit 45**

9:00 PM – Late

Social-Deduction Games: Werewolves of WeeM

Stephen Rider

Elm

Come discover which of your friends is a werewolf in this classic game of social deduction and cold-blooded murder. New players are welcome.

Social-Deduction Games: Blood On The Clocktower

Eli Hudec

Michigan A

Nightly sessions of "Blood On The Clocktower."

Friday

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Breakfast

Hospitality

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

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

9:00 - 10:45 AM

Gimme a Brake — On My Car, That Is!

Len Hiznay

Willow

As our cars get more fuel efficient and are lasting longer, they are also getting more complicated and computerized. But don't despair! There are still plenty of maintenance repairs and routine inspections that owners can do themselves. And when you can't do it yourself, how do you choose a technician? With a minimal amount of mechanical aptitude and a few specialty tools, consumers can still perform many recommended tasks to save money, stay safe and feel the accomplishment of doing something yourself. Come on, let's get dirty!

9:00 - 10:45 AM cont'd.

Questions That Matter
Roger Breisch

Birch

Questions expand future possibilities. Answers stifle them. Don't come to this session looking for answers, nor wisdom pouring forth from the facilitator. Come to this session prepared to think, reflect, and share. The questions we will explore are deeply philosophical. We will, together, inquire into a number of topics I hope will stimulate participants to reimagine, reconstruct, realign, rebalance, reclaim, renew, and rethink their lives. It's a tall order, but one i am certain Mensa members will relish.

Confessions of a Mad Iconographer: Thoughts on Seeing Something Where Everyone Else Sees Nothing
Christopher Kilgore

Michigan A

Art historian and cognitive archaeologist Christopher Kilgore will reflect on his adventures in research, lauding mentors and detailing opposition from a few respected but wretched individuals. He will share his original insights, from decoding ancient visual mysteries through years of private engrossment, to discerning artists' cleverly hidden Easter eggs in a spontaneous flashes of intuition. Chris will discuss connoisseurship, cognitive knacks, "amateur" scholarship, and the indispensability of the Western Canon of Art. (Full disclosure: Christopher Kilgore is not technically insane.))

Rising Economic Inequality: How Much, Why It Happens, Why It Matters, and What We Can Do About It
Ed Spire

Michigan B

Economic inequality has been rising in the US for decades, damaging our economy and society in the process. This presentation will discuss how high it has become, why it happens, how it damages our country, and what we can do about it.

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

Job Searching in a Tough Market
Erica Reckamp

Willow

The job search has changed. AI has inflated candidate pools and prolonged the hiring process. Learn how to stand out in a crowded market with modern best practices for your job search.

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM cont'd.

How to Train Your AI: Using Artificial Intelligence Accurately, Ethically, and Powerfully

Thomas & Kelly Galanis

Birch

Artificial intelligence has exploded into the technology world rapidly. It's used everywhere for everything - but is it being utilized the right way? Tommy and Kelly Galanis will share their experiences mastering the use of AI for work, research, and everyday things. They'll explain how AI can be maximized for more accurate results, when and how to use it ethically, and how to train this technology to meet your needs!

Sustainable Landscaping: Creating Beautiful and Environmentally Responsible Outdoor Spaces

Beth Peluse

Michigan A

Learn how to create a vibrant, low-maintenance native plant landscape that works in harmony with nature. This presentation explains how to design outdoor spaces that attract wildlife, conserve resources, and create lasting beauty - all while reducing your maintenance costs and environmental impact.

Taoist Tai Chi Demonstration

Stella Bryant

Michigan B

The practice of Taoist Tai Chi arts help to bring the mind, body, and spirit into balance, providing many health benefits. The International Taoist Tai Chi Society is a global volunteer organization founded by Master Moy Lin Shin.

Noon - 1:15 PM

Lunch Break

Hospitality

Beef Stew, Chicken Stew, Baked Potato Bar with a Selection of Hot & Cold Toppings & our Salad Bar.

12:30 - 1:45 PM

Crafting & Cards for Troops

Hieu Nguyen & John "Dewey" Bradford

Michigan B

Come create a craft from one of our pre-assembled Junque kits, or write out cards to be sent to the troops. These self-guided activities are a great way to take a break from the crowds. Please be courteous and clean up after yourselves.

Are We Living in a Simulation? Weird Clues and Creepy Coincidences

Emily Bialas

Willow

Ever feel like reality glitches? Déjà vu, odd coincidences, or patterns that seem too perfect to be random? Join Emily for a mind-bending exploration of the Simulation Hypothesis, the idea that our universe might be a sophisticated computer program. Together, we'll dive into bizarre places and creatures, strange scientific discoveries, and real-world "glitches" that will have you questioning what's real and what's code.Come ready to think, laugh, and maybe leave just a little unsettled. After all, the first step to escaping a simulation… is realizing you're in one.

Finding the Right Therapist for Your Gifted Brain

Tara Travia

Birch

Finding a therapist is hard, especially if you think faster, deeper, and more differently than most. High IQ often comes with unique challenges many therapists aren't trained to handle. You need someone who won't be intimidated, can meet you where you are, and challenge you thoughtfully. I'll share ideas on therapy types, niche expertise, and smart questions to ask so you can find a therapist who truly fits and supports your healing journey.

How to Play Craps

Jim Poserina

Elm

You're in the casino when you hear a bunch of people start cheering. You head over and see them standing around a big wooden tub with lots of arcane markings and stacks of chips placed hither and yon. Someone tosses a pair of dice, a man with a big curved stick yells "Yo!", and everyone cheers again. Baffling? If so, then it's time to learn craps! In this interactive workshop you'll learn the rules and what all the different bets mean. You'll get to throw the dice and come away knowing how to play one of the most exciting games in the casino.

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Ocean Shipping

Amy Bishop

Michigan A

The history of ocean cargo, global supply and demand, and the importance of this often invisible industry.

2:00 - 5:00 PM

Existence & Promenade Playtests
Jason Brooks

Michigan B

Partake in one of two new prototypes: Existence, a 2-player coop game, or Promenade, a simultaneous engine builder. In Promenade, you lead your unique secret societies from the world of Clandestine. Groups of Pawns rotate around the city, providing resources and effects to the players they visit. Infiltrate these groups with your own Pawns to mold them to your strategy. In Existence, you're both guardian angels making sure nothing stands in the way of your charge's existence. Together, make sure that their ancestors don't just survive, but overcome numerous hurdles to bring them into existence.

3:00 - 4:15 PM

A Perfect Pair–Wine and Cheese
Catrina Hays

Willow

We will be looking at the art and science of wine and cheese pairing. Come ready to learn the 'why' behind this classic duo. Experiment to see if you agree with the science, or if your taste buds say otherwise! Limited to 40 people. 21+ only.

Couture Alchemy: Clothing Art as Unique as You Are
Amy Luna Manderino

Birch

Learn the history and practice of Couture Alchemy and turn your wardrobe into walking works of art! For nearly all of history, people crafted their own clothes, celebrating the creativity, passions and values of their lives and communities. Blending ancestral tradition and modern sophistication into a timeless presentation that radiates dignity and sensuality, Couture Alchemy reclaims our birthright of beauty, humanity and freedom in our clothing with an art that is accessible to everyone. If you can sew a straight line, you can be a Couture Alchemist!

M-etaphysical SIG Meet and Greet
Tommy & Kelly Galanis

Elm

The M-etaphysical meetup is a place to discuss all things new age and metaphysical! A group that began during the pandemic, we enjoy monthly Zoom meetings on a variety of topics and are now an official Mensa SIG. Join us for a live meetup at WeeM where we will have an open discussion - paranormal, psychic, light work and more. Come listen, share, and support the lively discussions we are sure to have!Curious but not too familiar with the topics? We are a safe and open space that is welcoming to all.

3:00 - 4:15 PM, cont'd.

Punctilious Punctuation: Telling tales with (and of) those jots and tittles, including why they're called jots and tittles, and the horrifying story of why the period goes inside the quotation marks

Ian Randal Strock

Michigan A

Humans have a wonderful ability to miscommunicate with language. And as confusing as all those words are, they would be much, much harder to understand if it weren't for the punctuation we use to divide, group, emphasize, and combine them. Texting and newspapers' space-saving attempts may be responsible for turning punctuation into a dying art form, but Ian Randal Strock posits that punctuation is necessary, beautiful, evocative, meaningful… and a heck of a lot of fun. Come listen to this talk… if you dare. You may find yourself agreeing that the "schmutz" on the page really deserves our love.

4:30 - 4:45 PM

LEGO® Improv

Clyde Forrester

Willow

With a cup full of LEGO® pieces, try to create something unique and wonderful.

Thirty Years of AI: How Times Have Changed

Mathew Rouch

Birch

As a Computer Science undergrad in the early nineties, one of my final courses was in Artificial Intelligence. I had enormous fun playing with self-modifying LISP code and writing board games that might beat a competent human player. Fast forward to 2021 - I enrolled in the graduate program for Data Science, and again encountered a class in AI. And while I once again had enormous fun, the field is unrecognizable. Instead of playing board games, we're diagnosing illnesses. Instead of writing self-modifying code, we're working with objects hardly recognizable as code. Come see what's changed!

Gen X Ms Meet & 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!

4:30 - 4:45 PM cont'd.

Excavating Dinosaurs: You Can, Too!

Paul Vaitkus

Michigan A

Learn what it takes to be an amateur dinosaur excavator, and maybe take home a souvenir that's 165 million years old (if I remember to bring them).

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Dinner

Hospitality

Chinese Pepper Steak, Orange Chicken, Vegetable Pot Stickers, accompanied by Sides & our Salad Bar.

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

Colleen Baltis, Emcee

Michigan A/B

It's one of the many things for which we are (justly) famous: costumes. The children and often families show off their costumes: adorable, horrifying, funny, creative, traditional, heros, and characters you've never heard of. Come and cheer them on.

7:30 – 9:00 PM

Adults' Costume Parade/Contest

Nguyen Pham, Emcee

Michigan A/B

Another one of the many things for which we are (justly) famous. This year, the audience will vote 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.

Dress up as your favorite character. Put together a costume based on this year's; theme. Create a pun-tastic ensemble. Wear a traditional costume. Show your sexy side. Be part of a group.

Be prepared to laugh, groan, and, sometimes, to be confused. Discover one of the reasons that our Chicago Area Mensa RG is so great.

Warning: Children and family costumes will be shown first. Occasionally the adult costumes are not appropriate for younger or more sensitive viewers.

If you will be entering the costume contest, be sure to get a numbered ticket and write the name of your costume for our photo gallery. Please speak loudly and clearly into the microphone. The judges and the audience would like very much to hear the description of your costume.

7:30 – 8:45 PM

Debate Room
Marty Jalove
Elm

Debate Room is a moderated roundtable where anyone can speak without being interrupted. Our topics will include: ghosts, cryptids, the Fermi Paradox, death and property values, and other topics. See description for Friday, 7:30, for more info.

9:00 – 10:15 PM



HELL's Ms Meeting
Beth Weiss
Birch

HELL's M's is the Party SIG of American Mensa, and we get together at many RGs as well as the AG. If you're already a HELL's M, come wearing your favorite attack owl shirt! If you're not, come find out why you should join!

9:00 – 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 and cold-blooded murder. New players are welcome.



Social-Deduction Games: Blood On The Clocktower
Eli Hudec
Willow

Continuing nightly sessions of "Blood On The Clocktower."

9:00 – Midnight

Mensans Making Music
Thomas Ryan & Brittany Johns
Michigan A

Expect Tommy and friends to sing, dance, and rock their way into your hearts and minds with musical performances, where you can sing along or request a tune that they will play if they know it!

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!

8:30 – 9:45 AM

Dealing with Difficult People

Heather Booton

Birch

In our day-to-day lives, and especially as leaders, we encounter difficult people and situations that we don't always know how to handle. In this interactive session, we'll go over some basic tips for dealing with difficult people and situations, then troubleshoot some specific scenarios.This presentation is based on training initially developed for Mensa leaders and AG Guides, but has great takeaways for anyone who finds themselves dealing with sticky situations on a regular basis.

Tower of London, Windsor Castle, Westminster Abbey: You've Heard of Them – What are They Really?

EJBoris

Michigan A

These places are so famous that everyone has heard of them. But what are they really? Find out about the background, history, layout, and construction of these locations. Lots of pics.

Auto Care 101: What's That Warning Light About?

Len Hiznay

Michigan B

You don't have to be an ASE Master Technician to understand many of the basics about these machines we use to get around in on a daily basis. What's that "check engine" light about? What's all this fuss over "synthetic" oil? Len will answer these and many other questions about our 4-wheeled wonders. Bring your questions and your sense of humor, but leave your torque wrenches at home. Let's talk basic auto care in a language we can all understand.

9:00 – 10:15

Kids Halloween Craft

Megan Bratkovich

Maple

Come make a fun Halloween craft with us!

10:00 – 11:15

An Instruction Manual for Computer Security

Karen Heart

Willow

This talk outlines a practical, incremental strategy for eliminating malware threats by redesigning operating systems around the principle of least privilege. Broader security measures include secure data formatting and phishing-resistant identity mechanisms. The talk concludes with policy proposals to incentivize secure-by-design computing practices.

Learn a Language, Change Your Life

Barbara A. Laane

Birch

This speech will discuss the many benefits of learning a new language, from expanding your network to increasing your career opportunities. Cultural knowledge also widens your opportunity for building friendships that can last a lifetime.

Meet the AMC!

Beth Weiss

Elm

Curious about who helps guide Mensa at the national level? Come to our special "Meet the AMC" session. You'll have the chance to get to know members of the American Mensa Committee in a relaxed, informal setting, ask questions, and share your ideas and experiences directly with leadership.

The Lure of the Antarctic

Ken Levine

Michigan A

Are you interested in traveling to Antarctica? Which areas should you visit or avoid? Animal life? Historic sites? Do you want to enter the huts originally built by Scott, Shackleton, and other explorers? Ken has been to the Antarctic four times, including many islands. The presentation contains maps of the areas and dozens of photos, including eight species of penguins.

10:00 – 11:15 cont'd.

Yoga

Thomas Ryan

Botanic

Enjoy a yoga experience from a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away! Tommy Ryan, Mr. Mensa 2016, will guide you through many posture and flows and then a "hyperspace meditation" to help you move your body, relax, and quiet the mind. Be sure to bring a mat or a towel.



10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

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!

10:30 – 11:45 AM

Parent/Kid Swim Time
Megan & Michael Bratkovich

Hotel 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.

11:30 AM – 12:45 PM

Politics and Pie: Keeping the Peace
Claudia Pitts

Willow

Thanksgiving can bring joy — and political tension. Join an experienced clinical psychologist to explore strategies for navigating family differences with empathy and calm. Learn how to defuse conflict, set healthy boundaries, and focus on shared values, ensuring your holiday gatherings remain warm and meaningful.

Near-Death Experiences and Consciousness
Dan Punzak

Birch

At HalloweeM in 2024, Dan spoke about near-death experiences (NDEs) and how many paranormal events seem to occur during or after an NDE. Debunkers of paranormal phenomena believe they are hallucinations caused by a brain malfunction, such as oxygen deprivation. Dan will explain non-physicalist theories of consciousness that accommodate preternatural events.

What's So SCARY About PUBLIC SPEAKING?
Len Hiznay

Elm

Various surveys indicate that public speaking is one of the most feared situations for most people, ranking it as a tie with death for #1. Regardless of your background, there are a few tricks or tips that can help get you more comfortable. Whether or not you'll ever want to go on the public speaking tour, these helpful methods will at least prepare you to give that toast at your sibling's wedding.



Queen Bs Improv
Robin Jurkowski & Friends

Michigan A

The Queen Bs met in 2009 when they began taking improv classes at Laugh Out Loud Theater in Schaumburg. The Bs all fell in love with improv — and with one another. Realizing how much they enjoyed performing together, the Bs formed their own group and hired their amazing director, Guy Wicke. The rest is history. An official improv team since 2013, you can spot the Bs on stage in the Northwest Suburbs and Chicago area — performing, teaching workshops, leading teamwork and leadership sessions in corporate settings, and even supporting charity events. Learn more at queenbimprov.com.

Noon – 1:15 PM

Lunch Break

Hospitality

Mostaccioli w/Meat Sauce, Meatballs, Florentine Stuffed Shells, accompanied by Sides & our Salad Bar.

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

1:00 – 2:45 PM

Crafting & Cards for Troops
Hieu Nguyen & John "Dewey" Bradford

Willow

See description for Friday, 12:30.

1:00 – 2:45 PM cont'd.

Artificial Intelligence for Beginners
Leo Doyle

Birch

If you've ever thought about getting involved with AI or are just AI curious, this is the talk for you. This will be a non-technical presentation. Leo will demonstrate different uses for AI, including generating text, pictures, and videos. He does this locally on his laptop, NOT over the internet because of privacy concerns, using easily available free software. Come see the fun you can have with AI. Time permitting, he will take audience requests to generate original AI images.

Kids LEGO® Time
Megan & Michael Bratkovich

Elm

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



Animalia Obscura: Hidden Oddities of the Animals and Insects Around Us

Rebecca Fyffe

Michigan A

This lively presentation weaves science with natural history presented through the lens of Rebecca's work as an urban wildlife manager and wildlife disease epidemiology researcher. Rebecca will share specimens from her "Creepy Zoo," a traveling live insect zoo, and she invites you to meet her giant pet cockroach, Kafka. This talk is geared toward adults, but children are welcome to attend.

Disaster Rally Playtest

Jeff Bantly

Botanic

Join me for a demo play-through of Disaster Rally the Boardgame! You are a contestant in the reality TV show Disaster Rally! You are a rally driver and, along with your sidekick, you must face a disaster facing Rally City. Soup up your crazy rally car and yourselves and become the heroes who save the day! But, don't think your rivals are simply going to let you be the Rally Champion. So enter the competition along with up to four other players and see if you have what it takes. Fame and misfortune await! If you can't join us to play the game, stop by and check it out. I'll be in the Gaming area Saturday and Sunday.

1:30 – 3:15 PM

WeeM Pub Trivia

Kenya Zarns

Michigan B

Compete for bragging rights in this pub-style quiz! Teams of up to 5 people will be challenged on a variety of topics to determine who is the brainiest of all!

NOTE: This quiz is mostly harmless, but there may be some mature content. Seating may be limited, so please arrive 5-15 minutes early to join a team and claim your spot! Ages 13+

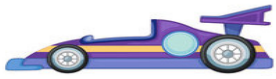
3:00 – 4:15 PM

Retsina Wine

Lora Mitchell

Willow

Lora became fascinated by retsina through Douglas Adam's books, and realized that it was another inside joke. Come learn a bit about the history of resinated wines, and why they have been simultaneously popular and wildly unpopular. We'll wrap it up with a tasting. 21+ only. Limited to 45 people.





3:00 – 4:15 PM cont'd.

Artificial Intelligence Promise & Perils

Lance Erlick

Birch

Leading scientists have expressed concern about the risks posed by AI. Thanks to recent breakthroughs, many milestones, which experts viewed as decades away only 8 years ago, have now been reached, making experts take seriously the possibility of superintelligence 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.

Mensa Foundation Meet-&-Greet: Unleashing Intelligence for the Benefit of Humanity

Nguyen Pham

Elm

Join Mensa Foundation President Nguyen Pham and members of the Board of Trustees for a spirited conversation on the Foundation's work and vision. Learn how we're rethinking intelligence, supporting gifted and neurodivergent individuals, and expanding programs that spark discovery, connection, and impact. Nguyen will share highlights from the September 2025 Foundation Forum global webinar and field questions about current and upcoming initiatives. Stop by to connect, pick up new materials, and discover how you can advance our mission to build a more gifted-friendly and neuro-inclusive world.

3:00 – 4:15 PM cont'd.

ANACONDA! The Little Known Giant

Terry Cullen

Michigan A

A science- and experience-based program on the world's largest snake. The realities of one of the strangest apex predators on the planet. Special guest appearance by Buttercup.

3:30 – 5:30 PM

Poker Tournament

Scott & Emily Bialas

Michigan B

All-In at WeeM! Join us for a friendly, all-ages poker tournament open to players of every skill level—from seasoned sharks to curious newbies. No buy-in, no pressure—just a game of fun, laughter, and a little friendly competition. Small prizes will be awarded to the top 3 finishers, but the real reward is the bragging rights. Come for the cards, stay for the good vibes.

4:30 – 5:45 PM

My Broken Brain: Surviving an mTBI

Jennifer Murtoff

Willow

After suffering a mild (!) traumatic brain injury and an upper cervical spine injury in a car collision, Jennifer found her world, both internal and external, drastically altered. While trying to manage and understand these frightening and challenging changes and the unpredictable recovery process, she also had to navigate the medical and insurance industries. Her goal in sharing her story is to promote understanding of this devastating and isolating invisible injury and to advocate for others with similar injuries.

Glastonbury - Where English History, King Arthur, and Joseph of Arimethea Meet

EJBoris

Birch

A little-known corner of Britain: Glastonbury. Fascinating stories from a fascinating place. From Celtic prehistory, medieval legends, and modern literature thru Christian mythology, the story of Glastonbury is woven from many threads.

4:30 – 5:45 PM cont'd.

Moire Patterns

Don & Melinda Grayson

Michigan A

Moire patterns, first noted in early Egyptian and Chinese writings, are most familiar as optical phenomena. This talk expands how the same underlying principles extend beyond the visual realm, appearing in mechanical systems, acoustics, electronics, and even celestial dynamics. This presentation reveals how moire effects connect disciplines and offer insights into both natural and engineered systems.

Human Hungry Hungry Hippos

Heather Booton

Botanic

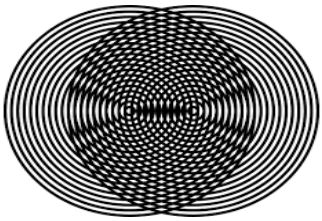
It's back! Join us for this life-sized version of the popular game. Teams of 3+ will compete to see who can collect the most balls in each round. This event is *definitely* kid-friendly. Come with lots of energy for this fast-paced and action-filled game. Spectators are welcome. All participants will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



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: Saranello's (in the hotel) is very good, and Wheeling's famed "Restaurant Row" is minutes away on Milwaukee.



7:30 – 11:30 PM

Photo Booth

A photo booth will be available 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 in case we need to undermine your future Senate bid. (Just kidding.) (Not kidding.)

7:30 – 8:45 PM

Debate Room

William Richmond

Elm

Debate Room is a moderated roundtable where anyone can speak without being interrupted. Our topics will include: ghosts, cryptids, the Fermi Paradox, death and property values, and other topics. See description for Friday, 7:30, for more info.

7:30 – 9:15 PM

Epicurean Experience

Hieu Nguyen & John "Dewey" Bradford

Botanic

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 – 9:45 PM

Pretentious Drinking
Alan & Colleen Baltis and Their Merry Band of Pourmeisters

Botanic

Liqueurs. The fancy stuff. Polished, cosmopolitan, perhaps even a bit snooty. The stuff you graduate to from beer and wine. You'd like to know more but, gosh, look at that price. What if that pricey potion isn't quite the palate pleaser you expected? Rejoice! As in years past, you can sample some truly amazing liqueurs–and your money's no good. Details are included in your registration package. We will supply a wide range of weird and wonderful concoctions from around the world. You can determine which you'd like to own, which should be left on the 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. Snobbish accents and extended pinkies optional.

The Mensa Foundation is generously sponsoring the sweets table at Pretentious Drinking. Stop by or attend their Meet & Greet to find out more about the year-round work Mensa Foundation does to unleash intelligence for the benefit of humanity.

Participants must be over 21. Please bring a gov't. issued ID and be prepared to show it.

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



9:00 – Midnight

Social-Deduction Games: Werewolves of WeeM
Stephen Rider

Elm

Social-Deduction Games: Blood On The Clocktower
Eli Hudec

Willow

10:00 – Late

Saturday Night Dance
DJ: Ed Barta

Botanic

Please join DJ Ed Barta for our Saturday night dance.

Sunday

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Breakfast
Hospitality

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

9:30 – 10:45 AM

Unlocking Happiness: A Science-Backed Journey for Curious Minds
Bette Lawrence-Water

Birch

Discover the benefits of happiness as a secret weapon for lasting joy and learn how to make it work for you. With 40% of happiness within our control, channel curiosity into flow states, transform overthinking into clarity, and build lasting joy. Create a personal happiness blueprint. Why attend? Experience fun, smart, science-backed strategies that rewire your mindset and transform brilliance into a meaningful and joyful life—without the fluff.

10:00 – 10:45 AM cont'd.

CAM ExComm Board 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 are welcome.

Amazing Race - WeeM Style
Jill Sackett

Michigan B

Amazing Race for Mensans! Based on the 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. See sign-up sheet by game room for more details.

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

If you haven't joined Mensa yet, here's your chance. If you attended HalloweeM, didn't you have a blast? Didn't you meet a lot of fun, interesting Mensans? I bet people understood your puns and got your jokes – wasn't that a pleasant surprise? So join us and continue to party and play with us. We recommend you preregister.

3:15 PM – Later

Anyone with time to spare?

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.

Presenter Biographies

Jeff Bantly

Disaster Rally Playtest (Sat.)

Jeff Bantly is an aspiring board game designer whose creation *Disaster Rally* will hopefully be his first published game.

Emily Bialas

Name That Tune Music Trivia (Thu.)

This is Emily's third time speaking at WeeM, proving she can't resist a good puzzle, especially when that puzzle might be reality itself. A former Fermilab employee, she's the author of a book exploring the Simulation Hypothesis, blending science and humor to ask whether life is more like The Matrix than we realize. Just don't be surprised if, by the end of her session, you start questioning whether you're really here… or just a line of code.

Scott and Emily Bialas

Poker Tourney (Sat.)

Scott and Emily Bialas bring the perfect mix of strategy and sass to the WeeM poker table. She keeps the game running smoothly, and he keeps everyone on their toes. Back for another year of bluffing, betting, and belly laughs—shuffle up and deal!

Amy Bishop

Ocean Shipping (Frit.)

Amy has been in the ocean shipping industry for over 30 years, and is currently employed as a consultant in maritime logistics. She earned a master's degree in Supply Chain Management.

Heather Booton

Difficult People & Human Hungry Hippos (Sat.)

Heather has been WeeM chair for 10 years now, and a leader in Mensa for 20. She likes to indulge her warped sense of humor by making up bios. As a leader in Mensa, Heather attempts to inspire smart people while also trying to negotiate peace treaties among 3-ton aquatic mammals. Voted "Most Likely to Be Eaten by An Herbivore," Heather is excited to bring you two excellent programs this year.

Megan Bratkovich

Kids' Programs All Weekend

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

Questions That Matter (Fri.)

Roger has lived an eclectic life. He taught high school, was a manager for a Fortune 100 company, owned a consulting firm, and ran a Chamber of Commerce. During his career, he worked with teens in an anti-alcohol, anti-drug program, and spent more than 4,000 hours answering calls on a suicide hotline. Roger gave three TEDx talks, and published two books. These experiences have left him with many questions. He and his wife of 43 years live in Batavia, Illinois.

Jason Brooks

Existence & Promenade Playtests (Fri.)

Jason Brooks (Brookspun Games) has designed and published tabletop games for the past few years with two games - *Legacies* & *Clandestine* - successfully funding on Kickstarter. Legacies sold out of its first print run and Clandestine delivers to backers in early 2026.

Stella Bryant

Taoist Tai Chi Demonstration (Fri.)

Instructor of Taoist Tai Chi since 2014.

Heidi Conde

Name That Tune Music Trivia (Thu.)

Heidi hosted trivia sessions at the senior center in her city for seven years. Two very well-received sessions were "Name That Tune Music Trivia" sessions. Heidi has a collection of music spanning many genres and many decades. She has always been surrounded by music, with a mother who sang in Chicago nightclubs, and a daughter who is a choir teacher. Heidi will play a variety of music for your listening and competitive enjoyment.

Terry Cullen

ANACONDA! The little known giant. (Sat.)

Terry, our director, has worked in veterinary herpetology and conservation for over 60 years. He is a member of the IUCN, a senior member of the crocodile vet group, a member of the Crocodile Specialist Group, a member of the Crocodilian DNA Group and a number of other conservation and herpetology affiliations.

Leo Doyle

Artificial Intelligence for Beginners (Sat.)

Leo Doyle has two degrees in electrical engineering and an advanced degree in computer science. He studied AI during graduate school and spends much of his spare time experimenting with AI. Leo was vice president of the third largest Internet provider in the world and started the first commercial Internet company in Indiana in 1992. He was a computer science professor at Purdue. Leo is a life member of Mensa, an entrepreneur, and enjoys collecting odd cars.

EJBoris

Tower of London, etc., Glastonbury (Sat.)

He has spoken at Speakers Corner, London; The Domain, Sydney; Red Square, Moscow; and Tiananmen Square, Beijing. Best Actor award. Sings five national anthems and hums three more. Appeared on national television in Australia. Filled with a variety of fascinating and utterly useless information. (C'mon, does it really matter, as long the program sounds interesting, informative, and entertaining?)

Lance Erlick

Artificial Intelligence Promise & Perils (Sat.)

Lance Erlick has given public presentations since 2014, including AI talks at public libraries, Mensa, and other venues. He worked with computers and programming since he was 18, watched capabilities grow exponentially, and has had an interest in robotics and AI throughout his life. This led to writing *The Android Chronicles* trilogy (Kensington Books), about an advanced android with artificial intelligence who rebels against her creator.

Clyde Forrester

LEGO® Improv (Fri.)

Clyde has been a Mensan for over 30 years. He comes from a long line of tinkerers and ne'er-do-well musicians, which led to his gravitating to music, computers, and LEGO®..

Rebecca Fyffe

Animalia Obscura (Sat.)

Rebecca is a socially-conscious entrepreneur and founder of Landmark Pest Management. The firm contributes significantly to science in the public interest. She is a researcher in collaboration with the Urban Wildlife Institute at the Lincoln Park Zoo, working under grants (National Science Foundation and the Grant Healthcare Foundation) to study human-wildlife interactions in community gardens across Chicago, and perform wildlife disease surveillance to monitor for emerging pathogens.

Kelly Galanis

Music Bingo, AI, Metaphysical (Thu. & Fri.)

Kelly Galanis, aka Dr. Diva, is a music aficionado, bringing daily joy through music with her interactive Encore social media posts. She now brings a new type of musical fun to WeeM with Music Bingo!.

Tommy Galanis

Music Bingo, AI, Metaphysical (Thu. & Fri.)

Tommy Galanis has been fascinated by computers from a young age. He turned this interest into a career and has spent the last 25 years teaching and working in the computer science field. His current interest has piqued with the rapid growth of AI, where he has spent time identifying how to maximize success with its use.

Tommy & Kelly Galanis

Music Bingo, AI, Metaphysical (Thu. & Fri.)

Tommy and Kelly Galanis are soulmates and twin flames 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.

Don Grayson

Moire Patterns (Sat.)

With over 30 years as a civilian engineer for the U.S. Navy, Don has worked across an extraordinary range of technologies — from satellites and ICBM guidance systems to submarine electronics, advanced radars, and other complex systems. His career reflects both technical depth and versatility in solving some of the most demanding engineering challenges. Beyond his professional achievements, he is an avid sailor and world traveler, bringing a spirit of curiosity to everything he does.

Catrina Hays

A Perfect Pair – Wine and Cheese (Fri.)

Catrina started her wine explorations when she was a grad student in the little known area of Sonoita, AZ, where she picked the brain of the former U of A Chemistry professor who ran a winery there. She has been a member of Lynfred Winery since 1999. Catrina's favorite oenophile hobby is food and wine pairing, especially discovering how the same wine can taste completely different with different foods.

Karen Heart

An Instruction Manual for Computer Security (Sat.)

Karen teaches computer science and computer security classes at DePaul University. From standalone end user applications to middleware to architecting distributed systems, Karen has created a wide range of software products and tools for a variety of industries, including among others publishing, banking, insurance, and logistics. She holds an MS in Computer Science from DePaul University, a JD from the University of Texas, and has completed the PhD coursework in Computer Science at UIC.

Len Hiznay

Gimme a Brake (Fri.) Auto & Public Speaking (Sat.)

My career history includes automotive technician, auto repair shop owner, and auto parts store manager. As a lifelong "gearhead" and auto enthusiast, together with my son, we have owned and repaired go karts, motorcycles, and too many cars and trucks to count. To me, a day spent in the garage is like a vacation. As an award winning member of Toastmasters International, I am thrilled to be returning to WeeM.

Eli Hudec

Blood on the Clocktower (Fri. Sat. Sun.)

Eli has been a long-time fan of social deduction games, and at the Chicago AG had the amazing opportunity to run nightly sessions of "Blood On The Clocktower." He is looking forward to a reprise of that experience at WeeM this year!

Marty Jalove

Your Elevator Pitch, Open Their Minds (Thu.)

Marty Jalove: motivational speaker, business coach, and Happiness Instigator, inspires joy in life's journey. With 20+ years in sales and marketing, he blends humor, storytelling, and strategies to make ideas relatable. Known for his charisma and genuine connections, Marty empowers others to overcome challenges and pursue fulfilling futures. From hosting "Bacon Bits with Master Happiness" to leading team-building workshops, he spreads happiness and creates memorable, impactful experiences.

Robin Jurkowski

Queen Bs Improv (Sat.)

The Queen Bs have been performing together for 11+ years. Our most recent (sold out!) performances include opening for the Second City troupe at Barrington's White House, regular shows at The Barrington Theater, a joint show at Hey Nonny in Arlington Heights with our friends Sunny Beijing, and most recently, a standing room only show at the Annual Gathering in Chicago.

Christopher Kilgore

Confessions of a Mad Iconographer (Sat.)

Christopher Kilgore has spoken at numerous RGs and AGs and has presented his original research at museums and universities in the United States, France, Britain, Spain, and Belgium. Chris is an alumnus of Rice University and received his MA in Art History from the University of Houston, where he was awarded the Art History Writing Fellowship. At the 2018 Indianapolis AG he was crowned "Mr. Mensa."

Bette Lawrence-Water

Unlocking Happiness (Sun.)

Bette Lawrence-Water is a leader, speaker, and consultant with over 20 years of experience. As Principal Consultant at Spectrum Strategic Solutions, and past President of the AIM Center for Independent Living, she is a drum major for personal change and improved communication. Her sessions are informative, empowering, and inspiring. She engages audiences through humor and interaction, and has received global recognition for contributions to improve overall personal and community health.

Barbara A. Laane

Learn a Language Change Your Life (Sat.)

Current Toastmaster since 2016. Have completed 2 paths in Pathways. Served as Club Growth Director. Longest planned talk was 1 hour for Vice President of Mebership and Vice President Public Relations. Give speeches in English and German. Enjoy collaborating with the audience.

Ken Levine

The Lure of the Antarctic (Sat.)

Ken Levine developed an interest in the region after his first trip to Antarctica in 2001. He has been there four times, including McMurdo Sound, the Ross Sea, the South Pole, South Georgia Island, the Antarctic Peninsula, Snow Hill Island, and many others islands. His personal library contains appx. 100 books on the subject. He has visited museum exhibits on this subject in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Norway, Chile, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.

Amy Luna Manderino

Couture Alchemy (Fri.)

Mensan Amy Luna Manderino fashions clothing art from repurposed textiles, a technique she named Couture Alchemy. Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's philosophy of organic architecture, she applied his maxim "form and function are one" to stylish clothing designed for the comfort and mobility of the unique wearer.

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.

Lora Mitchell

Retsina Wine (Sat.)

Lora is new to the Chicago area, but not new to WeeM. A member of the hospitality teaM, she is also a former RVC, a former Chief People and Compliance Officer, and... well, a lot of other former things.

Jennifer Morris

Scotch Whisky (Tasting) across the 80s! (Thu.)

Jenn (she/her) has visited numerous distilleries across Scotland and Kentucky, and has attended whiskey 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 wander across the Highlands, she looks forward to visiting Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebrides on future visits.

Jennifer Murtoff

My Broken Brain: Surviving an mTBI (Sat.)

Jennifer Murtoff was involved in a car accident in January of 2019. She suffered a brain injury and an upper cervical spine injury and is grateful to have recovered. She hopes that sharing her experience will help others better understand and advocate for people with similar injuries.

Beth Peluse

Sustainable Landscaping (Fri.)

Beth Peluse is the Conservation@Home Program Manager with The Conservation Foundation. She has an M.S. in Environmental Science and Sustainability. Beth collaborates with individuals and local organizations to promote the creation of sustainable, eco-friendly green spaces. By encouraging the planting of native plant gardens, she helps address rainwater management challenges, foster resilient ecosystems, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Nguyen Pham

Mensa Foundation, Costume Parade Emcee (Sat.)

Nguyen Pham (he/him) hails from San Francisco, CA as a proud member of SF Regional Mensa since 2010. At his first American Mensa Annual Gathering, Nguyen was crowned Mr. Mensa 2011 and proceeded to produce and emcee the Mr. Mensa Pageant for eight consecutive years, helping to raise more than $100,000 for the Mensa Foundation. Currently, Nguyen serves as President of the Mensa Foundation, Director of Science & Education of the AMC, and Vice Chair of Mensa's QueerSIG. Follow him @YayNguyen.

Claudia Pitts

Politics and Pie: Keeping the Peace (Sat.)

Dr. Claudia Pitts is a licensed clinical psychologist who has spent more than 25 years helping individuals and families handle life's most challenging conversations. Known for her practical strategies, humor, and warmth, she teaches people how to preserve relationships even in the midst of disagreement.

Jim Poserina

How to Play Craps (Fri.)

Jim Poserina learned to play craps in 2006 at the then-Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. He has previously led this workshop at Snowball, the RG of Central New Jersey Mensa. In his spare time he hosts RG wine tastings, learns to fly airplanes, drives a London taxi, and handles balloons in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Dan Punzak

Near-Death Experiences and Consciousness (Sat.)

Dan is a retired engineer and current LocSec of Sangamon Valley Mensa. He is a 51-year member and life member of Mensa. He has attended over 25 AGs.

Erica Reckamp

Job Searching in a Tough Market (Fri.)

Erica Reckamp is an Executive Resume Writer and Job Search Advisor for The Captivators and Job Search Like a Pro. Her insights have been featured in Forbes, LinkedIn News, and more. Erica also serves on Advisory Boards for organizations developing job search AI, including Yoodli.

William Richmond

Debate Room (Thu. Fri. & Sat.)

Bill Richmond recently retired from the Navy, where he served as an Intelligence Officer for 26 years.

Stephen Rider

Werewolves of WeeM (Fri., Sat, & Sun.)

Stephen is a life member of Mensa, and probably best known for his ongoing struggle with lycanthropy. He holds nightly support meetings throughout WeeM.

Mathew Rouch

Thirty Years of AI (Fri.)

Mathew Rouch is a network engineer at the University of St. Thomas. In 2024, he completed his Master of Science in the field of Data Science, along with a Graduate Certificate in AI Foundations.

Thomas Ryan

Mensans Making Music (Fri.), Yoga (Sat.)

Tom is a registered Yoga Teacher with over 200 hours teaching experience, and a music lover.

Jill Sackett

Amazing Race - WeeM Style (Sun.)

Jill is an Amazing Race fan, avid gamer, and occasional event-planner celebrating her 12-year anniversary of planning these whimsical and cerebral challenges.

Tom Schnorrenberg

Gen X Ms Meet and Greet (Fri.)

Tom Schnorrenberg is the coordinator of Gen X Ms SIG and serves as the Assistant Local Secretary of Boston Mensa. He loves to hang with friends, git gud in the games room, and savor culinary delights of all varieties.

Ed Spire

Rising Economic Inequality (Fri.)

Ed Spire is co-lead of NWSOFA's Restore our Democracy project, where we focus on issues regarding the effectiveness of the US democracy. As an Organizing for Action (OFA) Fellow, Mr. Spire works in conjunction with several progressive groups (such as Indivisible, the League of Women Voters, Moms Demand Action, and Represent.US) and is actively engaged in the promotion of progressive policies, including gun violence prevention, election integrity, and campaign finance reform.

Ian Randal Strock

Punctilious Punctuation (Fri.)

Ian Randal Strock is the author of Punctilious Punctuation (Milherst Publishing, September 2025), as well as several books on presidential history, and a slew of short science fiction stories. He's the editor-in-chief and publisher of Fantastic Books and Gray Rabbit Publications. And he's passionate about the proper—and poetic—uses of punctuation.

Glenn Sutton

7 Wonders Tournament (Thur.)

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 boardgames to even VR events, including the "7 Wonders" tournaments for over a decade here at WeeM.

Tara Travia

Finding the Right Therapist (Fri.)

Dr. Travia is a licensed psychologist, EMDR certified practitioner, consultant, and CEU provider of courses on advanced topics in the treatment of trauma including integrating ACT and EMDR techniques and helping clients re-build their sense of self separate from their traumatic history. She has been treating complex trauma for over 15 years in various settings with a focus on driven, gifted individuals.

Paul Vaitkus

Excavating Dinosaurs (Fri.)

Paul has absolutely no formal credentials in geology or paleontology and is pretty much an ignoramus about dinosaurs. But he has been a volunteer excavator of dinosaurs for 19 years (but has no formal affiliation) with an esteemed Illinois museum of natural history (not the one in Chicago).

Beth Weiss

HELL's M's Meeting (Fri.), Meet the AMC! (Sat.),

Beth Weiss is the Regional Coordinator for Region 4 and the Coordinator of HELL's M's, the Party SIG of American Mensa. She likes to say that her first WeeM changed her life.

Kenya Zarns

WeeM Pub Trivia (Sat.)

Kenya is the outgoing chair of Mensa's CultureQuest trivia competition, which she wrote and edited for from 2023 to 2025. A marketing and communications professional by trade, Kenya is a skilled trivia writer and host who has run trivia events at Mensa annual gatherings and regional gatherings across the country, as well as numerous events outside of Mensa..

A Very Special Thanks to:

- Mensan **Janice Esser**, for her ongoing generous donation to Pretentious Drinking.



- and the Mensa Foundation for its generous support of our sweet table at Pretentious Drinking. We're excited for the opportunity to work with The Foundation and highlight the year-round work they do to unleash intelligence for the benefit of humanity.

MENSA FOUNDATION

HalloweeM 49

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Chicago Area Mensa's

WeeM TeaM

WeeM Chair, Hotel Liaison ..... Heather Booton
Program Chair .....Marty Jalove
Hospitality Chairs . Susan Woodill, Rhonda Peek
Hospitality Minion..... Lora Mitchell
Beverages & Program Book.....Dave Gudjonis
Game Warden .....Ed Barta
Volunteer Coordinator.....Cat Sterrett
Vendor Coordinator..... Rae Goodman
Registrars ..... Lynn Collier,Theo Sparks
Treasurer.....Allison Reeves
Tournaments Coordinator ..... Glenn Sutton
Book Sale..... Teresa Tucker & Robert Little
AV Chair ..... Damian Christianson
On-Site AV.....Peter DuDeck, Greg Holcomb and Art Sparks
Peace Force Coordinator..... Karen Gruebele
Photographer .....John Powers
Photographer Emeritus..... John Muellner
Webmaster.....Barb Pohl
Trucking Coordinator..... Clyde Forrester
Awards Chair.....Teresa Tucker
Logistics .....Laceé Hudec
Logo & Pins..... Casey Carraher
Pretentious Drinking.....Colleen & Alan Baltis
Kids Chair .....Megan Bratkovich
Costume Contest MC .....Nguyen Pham
Special Guest Judge .....Robert Stalzer
Room and Ride Matching ..... Kris Petzinger
Epicurean Experience.....Hieu Nguyen and John Bradford
Decorations Chair..... Karen Gruebele
Soc. Deduction Games.....Eli Hudec and Stephen Rider
CAM LocSec.....Peter DuDeck

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

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!