

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

# ***BROADCAST***

Vol. 26, No. 5, May 2020

<http://frenchbroad.us.mensa.org>



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***Submissions to the Broadcast***

Deadline for articles, letters, comments, etc. is the 15th of each month preceding publication. Original material is welcomed. Maximum length is 250 words. Editor reserves the right to decline publication or to edit submissions, as long as intent and meaning are retained.

Please, no personal attacks!

**Events Calendar  
May 2020**

**These May Mensa events are tentative.**

We want everyone to stay healthy. We'll resume regular activities as soon as practical. Check the website for updates..

If circumstances require, the Executive Committee will conduct business via email, telephone, and/or Zoom.

Regular and special events are open to members in good standing. RSVPs are important for table planning. Please respond if you plan to attend an event. If you don't, we might not be able to seat you. And don't forget to look for the Big Yellow M Table on the table at Mensa events!



**New Members: French Broad Mensa welcomes you! Watch your mail for a coupon that you can trade for a \$5 contribution to your first meal with the group.**

**First Friday Lunch *CANCELLED***

**Sunday, May 3: Lumpy Rug Day**

**Monday, May 11: Trivia** (6:30 for dinner, 7:30 to play)  
at Jack of the Wood, 95 Patton Ave. in Downtown Asheville

Website: [www.jackofthewood.com](http://www.jackofthewood.com)

Contact: [wmcguffin@gmail.com](mailto:wmcguffin@gmail.com)

**Thursday, May 14: Dance Like a Chicken Day**

**Saturday, May 23: Lucky Penny Day**

**Thursday, May 28, 6pm: Thu.D!**

at Pack's Tavern, 20 S. Spruce St. in downtown Asheville

Website: <https://packstavern.com/>

Contact: [SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com)

**Saturday, May 30: Mint Julep Day**

## Local Secretary's Message



What are people doing during this period of social distancing? Most of the comments I've heard tell me that many of us are doing pretty much the same as we always do. It just feels different. I normally work at home, and might not leave my house for 3 or 4 days, but the instant someone tells me I can't, I have a list of absolutely essential and urgent errands!

I've been making facemasks for friends and family. When I see others wearing masks I'm encouraged that we are, in fact, trying our best to take care of each other.

Meanwhile I've been reading (an audiobook from the library every day or two), working on customers' quilts, wondering how much longer it will be before I can get my hair cut, and reviving a CRPG I haven't played for years (*Skyrim*).

Scattered through this newsletter you'll find out what some of your other Mensa friends have been up to.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary, [SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com)

### **Pat Benard**, whatcha doin'?

For me, it's business as usual. I'm in my studio most days, making pottery and lampshades. There's no way of selling anything for now, but when galleries reopen, I'll have lots of inventory. Being an introvert helps a lot these days. I'm also going to get a garden in soon.

As I was checking out of Ingles today, I saw a woman ahead of me with a large package of toilet paper. She said it was the last one on the shelf, but she offered to give me some if I was out. I said I'm not out, but thanked her for her generous offer. Looking out for neighbors. It really raised my spirits.

## ***Regional Vice-Chairman's Message***



There is an ancient Chinese curse that goes, “May you live in interesting times!” Well, these last two months can certainly be called “interesting,” and I think that the next two will be “interesting,” too. I’m referring to the pandemic COVID-19, of course. The widespread practice of quarantine has been met by different people in different ways. Italians are gathering on their balconies, singing and encouraging each other across the narrow streets. Here in my neighborhood, as the weather warms, more and more people are sitting out on their porches, waving and chatting to those who walk by, carefully sitting six to ten feet away if they choose to stop and chat for a few minutes. Neighbors say, “I’m going to the grocery store. Can I pick up anything for you?” We seem to have found a camaraderie in getting through this together.

Myself, I look at this as a Gift of Free Time! There are so many little projects that I have put off because I was too busy – and suddenly, there are no events to go to, no appointments to keep, no mind-numbing meetings to sit through. Think I’ll take a walk and see how that cute new neighbor on the porch three houses down is doing <grin.>

Mensa is an all-volunteer group. From the Chair of the Board, through your LocSec, all the way down to the gal who hosts the monthly restaurant meetng, we are all volunteers (not counting the twenty-some people who slave away in the National Office, so that our newsletter labels get printed, the rosters stay updated, etc.) That means this, folks: if you have even the slightest urge to help out on the local, regional, or national level, please let someone know. Volunteer as the local program chair, or proctor trainee, or whatever position is vacant in your local group. Just as important, if there is some event you would like to see happening in your local group, such as a games night, trivia night, gourmet group, Opera SIG, etc., then volunteer to host it. Make it happen! This “social isolation” thing will not last forever. There is

something really special about face to face time with other Mensans. If you haven't attended a local event in a while, make yourself a Post-Pandemic promise to venture out again.

Perhaps you live on the fringe of your local group. As a member of Mensa, you're welcome in every local group, so check out what neighboring groups have to offer. Their newsletters, complete with listings of events, are available to you on the Mensa website. Go to [www.us.mensa.org](http://www.us.mensa.org), click on the "Read" tab, and click on "Local Group newsletters."

A big part of my job as RVC is traveling to your area and meeting folks from your local group. I want to be available to you, so that I can reflect your needs and interests to the AMC, and report what is happening on the National level back to you. During this first half year, I have visited almost half of the groups in Region 5. I had hoped to visit you all, but COVID-19 has put an end to that for the next few months. However, I am just a phone call away, so if you want to reach out to me by email or phone, please do. I want to know your hopes and aspirations for the Southeast Region! Call me at 704-533-3351, or email me at [mensanancy@gmail.com](mailto:mensanancy@gmail.com) ).

Nancy Campbell, 704-533-3351 or [RVC5mail@gmail.com](mailto:RVC5mail@gmail.com)

**Marie Lewis**, whatcha doin'?

I inherited forty books by Mark Twain which I am now reading. Very droll and amusing! After that I'll reread Gore Vidal who once wrote:

"In their youth most people worry whether or not other people will like them. Not me. I had the choice of going under or surviving, and I survived by understanding (after the iron if not the silver - had entered my soul) that it is I who am keeping the score. What matters is what I think, not what others think of me; and I am willing to say what I think. That is the critical temperament. Edmund Wilson had it, but almost no one else now does, except for a few elderly Englishmen."

## ***Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie***

Gabbie hears your woes, and offers advice. Send your quandaries to Gabbie c/o the BROADCAST Editor.



*Hey Gabbie,*

*You always give such great advice, and I need some right away. About this Coronavirus... How did this hoax ever get started anyway?*

*Inquiring Mind*

*Dear Inquirer,*

*You're seeing the wrong hoax. You're looking at the Orange Menace who's now claiming to have saved the world (or at least our country) from the ravages of the "Chinese virus." Well, he didn't. And it's not a hoax. It's an actual disease that is killing thousands of people all around the world. Like Lincoln said (or was it P.T. Barnum?): "You can fool some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool everyone forever," or something like. I don't think I got that citing right, but you know what I mean.*

*Meanwhile, back at the ranch, COVID-19 is a very real threat to our species, Homo saps, and perhaps to all our primate cousins too. Are we living (sic?) through the end of the Age of Mammals? I don't know for sure, but if I were a catastrophist, that's what I'd think. What you're seeing here is a beautiful example of how evolution works. Long term changes, instant variations, etc. Ask a scientist.*



*[Gabbie continues...]*

*If you don't believe in evolution, see what's going on as a negative miracle, a thunderbolt thrown at the earth by a god who's pissed at us for being sinners, abortionists, war-mongers, and destroying the only habitable planet we have. Duh.*

*You go right ahead and believe or not whatever you want. It's not like I can convince you to change your mind anyway. Humans are like that; once an idea sets, it's like concrete. If you hit it with facts hard enough, you might make a dent or two, but the basic misconception is tenacious. Don't believe anything you hear, read, or see. And NEVER believe a politician, even though some of them do take their responsibilities seriously and try to benefit their constituencies, maybe even keeping them alive and healthy so they can pray the next pandemic away before they cast their vote to impeach.*

*Gabbie, Cosmic Prognosticator*



**Karen Youket**, whatcha doin'?

I'm still working at my paid job and my volunteer job, both considered essential. Still spending time gardening, landscaping, cleaning. I'm back to making my own granola since I can't purchase my favorite one anymore. I had already resumed making my own bread when I retired. ☺ Oh yeah, Spectrum made me an offer I couldn't refuse so now I have a smart phone and am taking my time figuring it out. Feels too much like homework. I did get in touch with long-time friends from around the country and beyond to be sure everyone is okay. So far, so good. And I'm almost caught up on my Mensa magazines, one more to read. I usually stay 6 months behind.



**Ron Jones**, whatcha doin'?

Read a new book every two or three days (problem Mr. K is closed).

Lots of yard work seeding, weeding, cutting and fertilizing.

Something interesting – I went to a Mensa gathering in Cambridge in 1980. I talked with a very pleasant lady at the gathering. Then I went home. My NORAD article was published in a Triple Nine publication. Last week this lady saw it and emailed me to see if I was the one that she met in Cambridge 40 years ago. She remembered a lot about me and the fact that we were the same age, but our birthdates were six months apart. She remembered so much and I so little. She said that I was memorable and was very happy to be in touch.

Not much else—I go to the market alone with latex gloves and a mask because Anne is very afraid of contact. Her AFIB scares her.

**Will McGuffin**, whatcha doin'?

I got moved...thanks to Ann Bass and crew. Ann owns "A Lighter Move" and helps folks in my situation downsize and move. They packed everything April 2, and the truck came and moved everything over here [Deerfield]. Then Ann and her workers unpacked everything and put things in their right place. She runs a fantastic service and I highly recommend them!

Spectrum TV and internet didn't work at first but after long waits online I reached a technician who knew how to solve the problem. My AT&T landline still doesn't work but I'm going to see about that.

I still have boxes to go through and discard more stuff, but the worst of it is over. The sale of my condo is going to be held up due to the Covid-19 stuff, but at least the painter can come, and after that I hope the cleaners and carpet cleaners. Then it's up to how quickly my agent can list and show the place. Sooner rather than later, I hope.

Also, please use my new email address [wmcguffin@gmail.com](mailto:wmcguffin@gmail.com) and discard all previous addresses. Thanks!

## ***Moosesylvania***

*by Lizzz Russell*

I recently spent three weeks in Fairbanks, Alaska. It should have been named Moosesylvania.

While waiting for my rental car, I had my very first close-up view of a moose. It was an omen.



### **Stuffed Moose at Fairbanks Intl. Airport**

I saw at least one or two moose every single day that I was there, sometimes four or five. I saw them on the side of the road, crossing the road, and in the woods. When a moose crosses the road, you stop and wait and sometimes you wait and wait. Moose take their time. You don't ever want to hit a moose. They can weigh as much as 2000 pounds and have a high center of gravity.

One morning I looked out my window and saw this:



At first, I was not sure what I was seeing. But then I saw momma. It was a baby moose! And that was only the beginning of my surprise encounter.

Around the same time, the next door neighbor called me to tell me moose were heading to my yard. I asked her what to do, for they can be quite dangerous. She said she sang *The Star Spangled Banner* really loud whenever she had to go out. I would have never thought of that.

The next morning, I looked out and saw this:

The mother dug out circles in the deep snow—one for her and one for baby (little nest to the right). She then lined the dirt with soft branches. It was a moose nest. I never knew moose made nests.

They stayed for over a week. I was dogsitting while I was there, so I HAD to go out into the yard or live with the stinky consequences. I didn't want to sing *The Star Spangled Banner* every time. So I started talking to the moose nonstop every time I went out. The moose initially ran away when they heard me, but after a few days they did not even get up.



I shall always remember the moose. :)

**Johanna Dokter**, whatcha doin'?

Jan and I have not done much to keep our sanity since that is a lost cause anyway. But we have kept busy with some things. First we painted both our garden sheds. They needed it, paint and also some repairs so they look a lot better now.

Then we started on cutting a big awful growth between our yard and that of the neighbors. It started with a couple of firs I guess, but after a couple of years most of the hedge consisted of ivy, poison ivy and dead limbs all grown together. So that is going well. We are about 3/4 of the way done.

In the house we try to keep up with our kids and other family and friends here and in The Netherlands. Reading, puzzles, diamond painting are some of the other activities. As well as golf and walking the park in Flat Rock.

And I baked an icecream cake and bread. Jan put in seeds for peas, lettuce, broccoli, carrots and other veggies. But the cold weather is not helping so far.

That is about it. Nothing weird or unusual or things we never did before. It is just like we are retired, which we are, and, besides no more volunteer work, everything else is still the same.



Johanna and Jan

## ***Executive Committee Meeting Minutes April 2020***

The ExComm meeting was conducted under “Stay at Home” conditions. We maintained our social distancing by conferring via emails.

Regarding the printing of our May *BROADCAST*, we considered the option that American Mensa had offered: Print newsletters are not required to be sent to members who opt out of receiving the electronic version. We strongly felt that we did not want to leave a goodly number of our members out. So we decided to send postcards to those members who do not have an email address listed, offering them options for receiving the newsletter. Members whose emails are known to us, but who receive the print version, will receive an electronic copy via email.

We decided to make all May events tentative, based on conditions in effect at the time they might occur. Already, the First Friday lunch for May has been cancelled, with the expectation that we will still be under “Stay-at-Home” requirements.

Submitted by Grace Lehto  
Deputy Local Secretary

You may suggest topics for future agendas by emailing [SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com).



Grace demonstrates unique protective attire for grocery shopping.

**Lizz Russell**, whatcha doin'?

We are fine.

Be grateful for your health.

There is a huge branch in the yard that came down during the storm yesterday. I have to get out there with the chainsaw. It was too wet yesterday. And the grass is growing like a weed and also with weeds. And the bushes are singing

Trim Trimmamee, trim trimmamee, trim trim trim me,  
And we will look lovely, as lovely can be...

**Lan Sluder**, whatcha doin'?

Sheila and I are in "self-quarantine" since March 16 on our farm and only go out to pick up curbside groceries at Harris Teeter, meds and gardening supplies. Probably like most people, we're doing a lot of Zoom video meetings, baking bread, cooking, sleeping late, watching CNN and MSNBC, reading the NYT and WSJ...and drinking. In the early days of Covid-19, I did a 25,000-word quickie ebook on the novel coronavirus but decided not to publish it because things were changing so quickly, and besides, it wasn't very good. Sheila has been taking nature walks in the beautiful spring weather, and I've worked with my honeybees some, starting a new hive to replace one that was a winter dead out. I'm (again) trying to learn Chinese, this time using Duolingo – I'm on Day 46 – and also Coffee Break Chinese, a paid app from the U.K. I'm reading a biography of Robert Stone, of the great novelists of the second half of the 20th century, but I can't seem to concentrate for long.

Stay safe!

## ***Financial Report for March 2020***

Opening Balance at February 29, 2020.....	\$4,338.64
Receipts:	
Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy .....	\$133.90
Total Receipts.....	\$133.90
Disbursements:	
Newsletter printer dues .....	\$79.00
Newsletter editor dues.....	79.00
Total Disbursements .....	\$158.00
Closing Balance at March 31, 2020 .....	\$4,314.54
Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Treasurer	

## ***Trivial Report***

The Whoos weren't able to play Quizzo in April; May is uncertain. Instead, you can check out the crossword puzzle that Michael Havelin has created to keep our wits sharp.

### **Fae Armstrong**, whatcha doin'?

I'm still planning, hoping to resume the First Fridays for our activity - - maybe in June although restaurant situation leaves it in doubt even if we **can** go out...

I live in a building of 80 apartments for the elderly -- good so far in that we are "distancing" and "isolating", no virus. Learning to phone people instead of contact, appreciative of those who phone me.

Catching up with all the magazines not read, and many books saved through the years for 'later'.

Finishing up some molding needed on bookcases and odds and ends of painting. If I get too bored, there is my wood-carving to finish from the Rio Grande Valley winters (2004 procrastination).

If I don't get anything done today, there's always another day just like it tomorrow -- or is there?

## **Crossword Puzzle #101**

*by Michael Havelin*



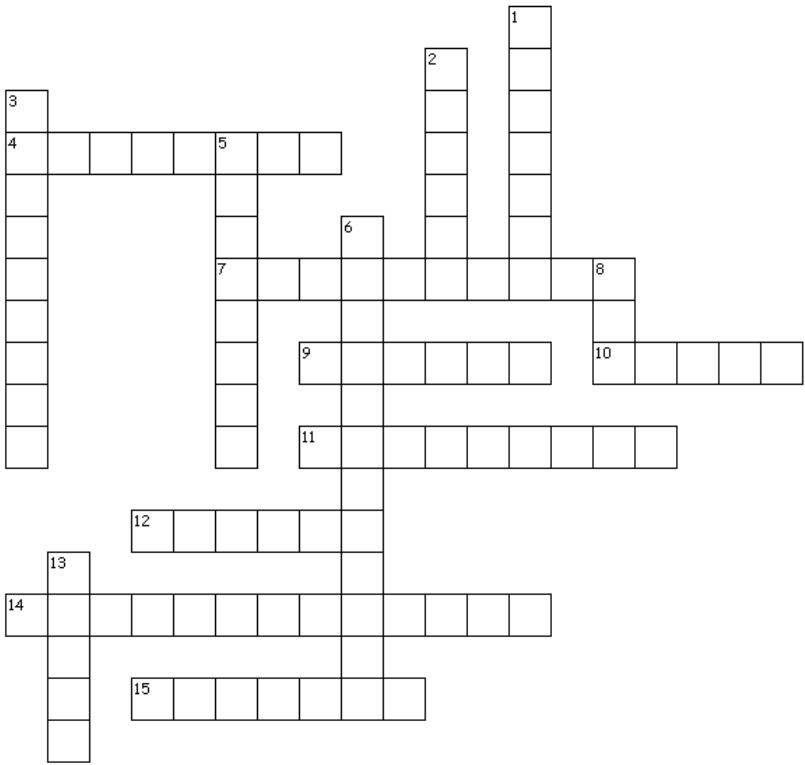
### ***Across***

4. A state of virulent anger.
7. A sometimes obstacle to human endeavor.
9. The sound of bellowing
10. Company that revolutionized document copying.
11. A person afraid of foreign people or cultures.
12. A burrowing, herbivorous marsupial of the family Vombatidae.
14. Projectile vomiting.
15. An alcoholic beverage, sometimes served as an ingredient in a mixed drink.

### ***Down***

1. Determining the quantity of a constituent by adding a reagent of known strength and measuring the volume necessary to convert the constituent to another form.
2. A middle eastern capital city.
3. Physical condition of a catatonic schizophrenic.
5. An interpretation of a text.
6. To throw something from a window (higher the better).
8. A pecuniary burden on individual to support government.
13. International organization for pointy-headed people and other smart animals.





**Michael Havelin**, whatcha doin'?

Painting,

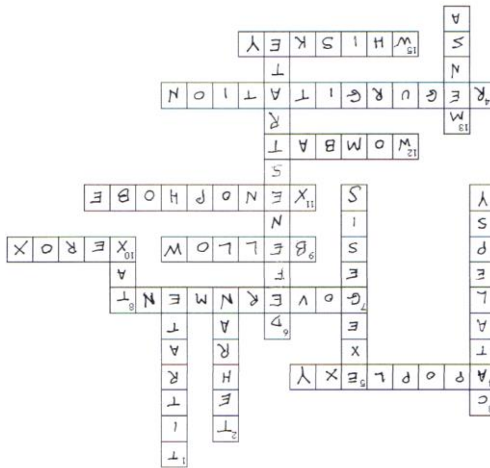
writing,

worrying...

What's new?

# Crossword Puzzle #101 Solution

by Michael Havelin



- Defenestrate      To throw something from a window (higher the better).
- Catalepsy        Physical condition of a catatonic schizophrenic.
- Titrate            Determining the quantity of a constituent by adding a reagent of known strength.
- Bellow            The sound of bellowing
- Whiskey          An alcoholic beverage, sometimes served as an ingredient in a mixed drink.
- Mensa            International organization for pointy-headed people and other smart animals.
- Wombat           A burrowing, herbivorous marsupial of the family Vombatidae.
- Xenophobe        A person afraid of foreign people or cultures.
- Xerox             Company that revolutionized document copying.
- Government      A sometimes obstacle to human endeavor.
- Apoplexy         A state of virulent anger.
- Regurgitation    Projectile vomiting.
- Tax                A pecuniary burden on individual to support government.
- Exegesis          An interpretation of a text.
- Tehran            A Middle Eastern capital city.

## ***Hey, look who's here!***

**Bob Bouvier**, whatcha doin' way down there in Texas?

I'm checking in with you to see how all my FBM friends are doing. Leslie and I are hunkered down in San Antonio. The situation here isn't bad but it is getting a bit worse as the number of people infected is growing.

We still haven't attended any local MENSA activities here except one lunch a few months ago. One would think the activity calendar would be crowded with events in an LG this large (several hundred) but, alas, no. There's one lunch, one speaker meeting, and one monthly gathering typically but, in fact, we haven't felt a great yen to attend.

We have some hope to be in your part of the country in early June - depending on the pandemic situation. Perhaps we can join in with one of your activities. I'll let you know when the time comes.

Sending you all our best wishes.



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## **French Broad Mensa Contacts**

**National Office...** 817-607-0090... AmericanMensa@mensa.org

### **Region 5 Vice-Chairman**

Nancy Campbell.... 704-533-3351 ..... RVC5mail@gmail.com

### **French Broad Mensa Elected Officers:**

#### **Executive Committee**

#### **Local Secretary**

Sharron Armel..... 828-280-6234 ... sharronarmel@gmail.com

#### **Deputy Local Secretary**

Grace Lehto..... 828-575-2877 ... gracelehto@yahoo.com

#### **Treasurer**

Wayne Stanko ..... 828-253-8781 ... wstanko@charter.net

#### **Member-at-Large**

Jeff Patterson..... jefflpatt@icloud.com

### **French Broad Mensa Appointed Officers:**

#### **Proctors**

Karen Youket ..... 828-645-4569 ... kyouket@charter.net

Carmen Jessup ..... ciej@aol.com

#### **Editor**

Sharron Armel..... 828-280-6234 ... sharronarmel@gmail.com

#### **Webmaster**

Lizz Russell..... lizz@dnet.net

#### **Testing Coordinator**

Mark Crossley ..... 704-798-3247 ... mcrossley@qualman.com

#### **Ombudsman**

Will McGuffin ..... 828-274-5050 ... wmcguffin@gmail.com

#### **S.I.G.H.T.**

Lizz Russell..... lizz@dnet.net

**Membership Coordinator** ..... Position Open

