

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 26, No. 10, October 2020

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



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On the Cover

Q: Are you ready for the fall?

A: That depends on whether you mean Autumn
or the Fall of Civilization!

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 include “FBM” in the subject line of your email.

SharronArmel@gmail.com

**Events Calendar
October 2020**

**In-person events will be
scheduled as soon as it's safe
to do so. We'll let you know!**

We want everyone to stay healthy. We'll resume regular activities as soon as practical. Check the website for up-to-date information.

As circumstances require, the Executive Committee will continue to conduct business via email, telephone, telepathy, 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.



October Birthdays:

**Carroll Burnette
Phillip Griswold
Laurence Johnson
Michael Korstange**

**Skip Queen
Christina Velderman
Paul Wright**

Stay Safe ♦ Stay Healthy ♦ Stay Connected

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

Local Secretary's Message



Two issues take up most of my brain's bandwidth these days: Staying healthy, and voting.

Staying healthy: I've chosen to stay home when possible, to wear a mask in public, to stay at least 6 feet from other people, and to wash everything in sight. Repeatedly. I encourage you to do that, too, or whatever it takes to make you feel as safe as possible.

Voting: In the last few *BROADCAST* issues, Wayne Stanko and I outlined the process for voting by mail. In North Carolina, that means by Absentee Ballot. You can still request an Absentee Ballot and get your official ballot mailed to you. Then you return it by US Mail, by taking it to an Early Voting site, or by taking it to your county's Board of Elections office (before Election Day).

You have lots of options, but please do vote. Your vote is your voice, and you have the right to make it heard.

- **Vote Early in person** – the best way to make sure your vote is counted, and that you encounter as few people as possible
- **Vote in person on Election Day** – this will assure you that your vote is counted, but you may encounter long lines and lots of public contact.
- **Deliver your Absentee Ballot** to the Board of Elections – you can make sure it gets there as early as possible, and you may not even have to leave your car.
- **Mail your Absentee Ballot** – If this is your choice, do it as soon as possible to work around possible delays in the mail delivery system.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

SharronArmel@gmail.com

November Theme

Lan Sluder invites everyone to send in pictures, cartoons, poems, stories, or whatever format you like, representing things you miss doing this year. We all have fond or funny memories of simple things we used to do, not knowing the last time we enjoyed them was going to be the last time for a long while. What have you added back to your bucket list?

Please send your ideas to the Editor by October 15. Thanks!

Regional Vice-Chairman's Message

Ok, I guess that it is time to admit that this COVID thing isn't fun anymore (not that it ever was.) To me, the best part of being a Mensan is getting together with other Mensans, that lovely feeling that "at last I have found my tribe." Part of it is conversation with folks who get your jokes without your having to explain them. Part of it is just the caliber of conversation: the right half of the table is talking about the Higgs-Boson Particle Accelerator, and at the other end there is a civil political conversation going on. Think about it – where else can you get a real political debate without it coming to blows? I am really, really ready for a Mensa "fix."



I agree with you – online just isn't the same. But it is the best option we've got right now, and for the rest of this year, at least. But electronic meetings are better than nothing.

You can find some of them listed on the Events Calendar at <https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/> , like the Disnerd Ms, a group that hosts a virtual watch party of a Disney movie on most Friday evenings, or the Musical Theater Ms, which hosts a virtual watch party of a musical or movie musical on most Sunday afternoons.

Charlotte Blue Ridge Mensa is sharing their speaker meetings by Zoom (fourth Friday of the month, every month.) In September, they hosted “An Evening of Language and Laughter” with Mensa Bulletin language columnist Richard Lederer. Each month there is an online Book Club Meeting, and an “All Talk, No Action” discussion group. CBR Mensa also publishes (with their permission) most of San Francisco Mensa’s online offerings. If your group doesn’t have someone who wants to put together a Zoom for your local group, at least get your editor to publish what is available from other groups! Last month I joined a Zoom with South Coast Mensa, which has only 67 members. (See? Even small groups can stay in touch!) Those who participated had a lively evening of fun and games. C’mon, folks, we can DO this!!

Chicago Area Mensa is hosting a Leadership Development Workshop on “Dealing with Problem Members” on October 7 at 8 PM Central Time. You must register for this one. You can register at <https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/ldw-being-assertive-in-dealing-with-problem-members/>

Mensa of Northeastern New York recently held a virtual RG, and invited Mensans anywhere to join in. Read about it at <https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/events-list-view/>

Other groups are holding virtual Games Nights, virtual discussion nights, virtual happy hours, and so on.

See you online at one of these meetings!

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

Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



Dear Gabbie,

Looks like the world is still in a mess and heading down into the maelstrom even deeper. What's going on? What can I do as a regular citizen to help?

Concerned and Wanting to Help

Dear Concerned,

You do-gooders make me sick. You don't get it. It's gonna take boatloads of money to fix what's going on, money paid into the pockets of the fat cats who are running things and who don't give a flying flip about you, me, or anyone else.

But be careful who you bribe to do whatever. Remember this truism: an honest politician is one who stays bribed.

Gabbie

Nominating Committee

Will McGuffin, as Chair of the Nominating Committee this year, continues his efforts to put together a slate of candidates for our 2021-22 Executive Committee. The schedule for getting all the tasks done is:

October 15: All candidates' names and (optional) candidate statements to the *BROADCAST* editor for publication in the November newsletter.

November 15: Ballots will be mailed to all French Broad Mensa members.

December 15: All ballots to be returned to Will McGuffin, who will convey the results to the Editor for publication in the January issue of the *BROADCAST*.

Questions? Please contact Will at 828-274-5050 for info.

Mensa Scholarships

Wayne Stanko is continuing his work as Chair of our Scholarship Committee. This is not a one-person effort – so please plan to help Wayne as he requests.

Starting September 15, the Mensa Foundation welcomes applications to its scholarship program. More than 150 scholarships are being offered. Only one of the scholarships requires membership in Mensa. All scholarships offered by the Mensa Foundation are essay-based.

You may read more about it at:

<https://www.mensafoundation.org/newsroom/press-releases/mensa-foundation-scholarship-period-starts-sept-15/>

The Kindness of Strangers

Last month, Grace Lehto invited members to share stories of experiencing the kindness of strangers, friendly people unexpectedly providing help when it was most needed. Grace hopes "...Perhaps we can restore some optimism among ourselves and maybe even be an inspiration for all of us to be a kind stranger for someone we can help."



Once we were camping in Georgia and playing a round of golf in the State Park golf course. When we were done, our truck did not start. What to do, what to do. Luckily two young guys were just about to drive off when they noticed we were in a jam. We asked if they had jumper cables. They did not. But with the tools they had and their wits, they got us started up.

With a lot of "yes ma'am" and "no sir" they were two great Southern boys helping a bunch of stuck Yankees.

We were grateful for a hand given when needed most.

Johanna Dokter



Some friends and I met at Atlanta Bread Company for dinner. The next morning, the small case holding my credit cards, driving license, etc. was missing. I called ABC and asked if they had found it. Then I went there and looked in the booth where we'd sat, and didn't find it. I described it to a staff person who checked their Lost & Found box with no luck. Resignedly, I called two banks to cancel cards and get them reissued, and went to the DMV to replace my driving license.

About a week later, I came home to find a small brown paper bag by my front door. In it was my card case just as I'd last seen it (including the irreplaceable slip showing I had \$68 of book credits at Mr. K's!), plus a giant oatmeal cookie.

I was so surprised – they could have called me, or emailed me, but someone made a kind gesture to bring it to my house. Plus the cookie!

Sharron Armel



A Double Whammy
by Grace Lehto

It had stopped snowing by the time the bus pulled into the Greyhound station. It was February, 1963. I'd gone home for the weekend for my mother's fiftieth birthday. I was looking forward to getting back to the dorm. I'd catch the local bus and make it back to campus long before curfew.

But there was a hitch in my plan. The city bus had changed its schedule and no longer ran on Sundays after 5:00 PM and I had just missed the last bus to campus. I didn't panic at first. There was still plenty of time. Surely there would be someone headed towards campus who would be willing to give me a ride.

I considered walking but thought better of the idea. Although it had stopped snowing, it was still cold and the sun was setting fast. I was wearing a skirt as was required by the dress code at school. Slacks were not allowed for the ladies back then. It was a rule that had always annoyed me. Did the governing body at campus not consider frostbite of the knees as a clear and present danger? The guys were required to wear slacks, no jeans or anything quite that casual. All the profs wore suits. It seems shabby chic had not yet hit the fashion industry.

I asked nearly everyone in the bus station. There were a few who looked too dangerous to converse with, but I inquired of as many as I dared. Seems that no one was headed in my direction. I briefly considered getting a cab but when the cabbie informed me that it would cost about \$10.00 to campus, I knew it was out of my range.

I called my friends at the dorm from one of the six phone booths in the lobby area. No one had a functioning vehicle, it seemed. But Linda did offer to lend me the money if I could get a cab to the dorm. I went back to the cabbie and told him of my predicament. He informed me that unless I had the money on me, he couldn't take me. Company policy he said.

I was now beginning to panic. I thought about hitchhiking but that didn't seem like a very good idea. I'd heard stories of horrible things happening. I decided to do another sweep of the bus station. Maybe someone new or someone I had missed before might be going my way. If I didn't make it back before curfew, I could be suspended or expelled. And I would not be allowed back in the dorm. At 9:00 PM I would be just out of luck. The door would be locked and I did not want to think about being out in the cold for the night.

As I was beginning my round of the bus station for the third time, the cabbie came up and tapped my on the shoulder. He asked if I still wanted to go back to campus.

“Oh, yes,” I replied, “But I still don't have the money on me.”

“That's OK,” he said. “Someone has volunteered to pay your fare.”

“Really? Who? I must thank them. Get their name and address so I can send them a check.”

The cabbie pointed to a man sitting by himself in the lounge area. One of the few people I had not asked. A scary looking person. Black leather, tattoos, piercings, long black hair like Captain Hook. It was almost like one of today's Goths doing a walk on in a Father Knows Best episode. And he was paying for my cab.

I walked up and thanked him. And I asked for his name and address so I could mail him the money. He said, “No, little lady, just pass it on. Sometime in the future, help someone else.”

And that's what I did and have been doing ever since. I made it back to the dorm in time that night and life went on.

That, ladies and gentlemen, was a double whammy. Two life lessons in one go. Always pass it on and never, ever, judge a book by its cover.



Computer Ransomware and Drive Wipers

by Lizzz Russell

There are two MAJOR threats to computers and smart phones—ransomware and drive wipers.

Ransomware and Drive Wipers Explained

Ransomware takes some or all of your files, encrypts them, and then asks for money. If you don't pay, your files are then either published on the internet, deleted, or left encrypted.



If you pay the ransom, sometimes you get your files back, sometimes you don't. Plus, chances are great that you will be targeted again. (aka Sucker List)

Some ransomware encryptions have been figured out, so sometimes it is possible to recover your files, but it is a crapshoot. Seek professional help for recovery.

Drive wipers simply delete everything on your computer. Sometimes your files can be recovered with special drive recovery programs, but that is usually not the case. Many drive wipers add the extra step of overwriting your files with garbage before deleting them so that they can never be recovered. Plus they often mess up the master boot record and partition tables of the hard drive, which cause other problems.

Just how serious are these threats?

Here are some examples of what happened as a direct result of ransomware:

Ransomware recently cost a woman in Germany her life.

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/ransomware-attack-at-german-hospital-leads-to-death-of-patient/>

Many hospitals and clinics have been ransomed and had to limit admissions or send people home.

<https://www.healthcarediver.com/news/hospitals-clinics-most-likely-to-be-hit-with-ransomware-attack/572091/>

School openings had to be delayed in quite a few school districts.

<https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/ransomware-attacks-disrupt-school-reopenings/d/d-id/1338877>

Beyond the risks to lives, livelihoods, and the functioning of our infrastructure, there are many billions of dollars that have been lost by paying ransoms and by the costs of recovering.

<https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/01/02/131035/ransomware-may-have-cost-the-us-more-than-75-billion-in-2019/>

<https://blog.emsisoft.com/en/35583/report-the-cost-of-ransomware-in-2020-a-country-by-country-analysis/>

Many businesses, governments, and individuals have lost their important documents, contacts, utility billing, tax information, pictures, and much much more to these threats.

When the city of Atlanta was ransomed, it knocked out multiple city departments and cost much money.

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/cybersecurity/atlanta-s-ransomware-attack-may-cost-the-city-17m.html>

Every phone, every computer, every backup, and even network attached storage are vulnerable. If you are targeted, the hackers have a way to get you.

What happens when things are ransomed?

Below are two pictures on a computer before and after being ransomed. They are shown with two different varieties of ransomware. There are thousands of variations.

Before Ransomware



Pic1.jpg



Pic2.jpg

Same Pix After CryptR Ransomware



Pic1.jpg.mp3



Pic2.jpg.mp3

(NOT music files)

Same Pix After Zepto Ransomware

 8691502D-6276-4449-7EA5-231D3E570476.zepto
 8691502D-6276-4449-3707-AB25AE68C97F.zepto
 8691502D-6276-4449-A3A0-3AF4EAA61C88.zepto
 8691502D-6276-4449-ECBD-85229D4336A1.zepto

(Two files for each picture)

Along with the trashed files, you get some form of a ransom note. Here is an example:

```
NOT YOUR LANGUAGE? USE https://translate.google.com

What happened to your files ?
All of your files were protected by a stroeg encryption with RSA4096
More information about the encryption keys using RSA4096 can be found here:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSA_(cryptosystem)

How did this happen ?
!!! Specially for your PC was generated personal RSA4096 Key . both public and
private
!!! ALL YOUR FILES were encrypted with the public key, which has been transferred to
your coaputer via the Internet.
!!! Decrypting of your files is only possible with the help of the private key and
decrypt program . which is on our Secret Server

What do I do ?
So, there are two ways you can choose: wait for a miracle and get your price doubled,
or start obtaining BITCOIN NOW! . and restore your data easy way.
If You have really valesble data, you better not waste your time, because there is no
other way to get your files, except aake a payment.

For more specific instructions, please visit your personal home page, there are a few
different addresses pointing to your page below:
1 - http://scodr5344ygfveyjbfkw4fhsefv.heliocfetch.at/8AE71861475D8068
2 - http://pts764gt354fder34fsqv45gdfsavedfgsfg.kraakula.com/8AE71861475D8068
3 - http://yyre45dbvn2nhbefbah.beguavelic.at/8AE71861475D8068
If for some reasons the addresses are not available, follow these steps:
1 - Download and install tor-browser:
http://www.torproject.org/projects/torbrowser.html.en
2 - After a successful installation, run the browser
3 - Type in the address bar: xlovfznrq4vf7dli.onion/8AE71861475D8068
4 - Follow the instructions on the site

I

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Your personal pages
http://scodr5344ygfveyjbfkw4fhsefv.heliocfetch.at/8AE71861475D80
http://pts764gt354fder34fsqv45gdfsavedfgsfg.kraakula.com/8AE71861475D80
http://yyre45dbvn2nhbefbah.beguavelic.at/8AE71861475D80
Your personal page Tor-Browser xlovfznrq4vf7dli.ONION/8AE71861475D80
```

Almost all ransom demands are made in bitcoin, which adds another level of difficulty for the average person.

WHY?

Ransomware usually is about getting your MONEY. In some cases, such as North Korea, the money is for buying things like missiles and other munitions.

The other major threat is **DESTRUCTION**. If your computers and phones are destroyed, can you function?

How to protect yourself

Prevention

Most ransomware comes embedded in attachments to emails; some come from downloads from infected websites.

One of the best things you can do is read emails and surf with a machine that does not have your valuable files on it. A junk computer or a cheapie tablet easily fits the bill. Plus, if possible, the internet address of the junk machine or cheapie tablet would be on a different range of internet addresses from the machine that has your valuable files (called network segmenting).

Plan B for BACKUPS

Think about the consequences of losing:

- phone numbers and addresses of friends, family, and business associates
- pictures and videos of loved ones
- medical records
- scanned copies of important tax and legal documents and IDs

In addition to a computer backup, you might also want a printout or paper backup, too.

Your backups should be stored somewhere that is out of the reach of hackers and evildoers.

Ideally, you would make an extra backup that you keep in some other location in case of flood, fires, theft, or other disasters.

The most common reason that I hear for not having a backup is “I don't know how to back up my files.”

Many people assume that cloud backups are all they need (such as iCloud, OneDrive, Cabonite, and so many others). Cloud backups reside on somebody else's computer. If the internet ever fails, how will you get your files? Also, cloud backups are sometimes quite incomplete due to slow internet and other probs.

Click on the links below to get specific instructions for backing up your phones and computers.

Backing up phones (iphones & androids):

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

Backing up computers (Windows, Macs, Linus, and others):

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

If You Think You Are Being Attacked by Ransomware or Your Files Start Disappearing

Pull the plug on computers. Hold the power button down on laptops or phones until they shut off. Every second you wait could be more files lost. Seek professional help.

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Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany

TODAY IS OCTOBER 12TH,
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY.

BUT IT WAS FORMERLY KNOWN
AS COLUMBUS DAY,
IN HONOR OF
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

HE WAS AN EXPLORER.

THAT DETECTIVE
IN A RAINCOAT?

I THINK HE DISCOVERED OHIO.



Betty Hoss 2020

Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany

LIVE LONG AND
PROCURE LOTS
OF CANDY.

THE PART I WAS
BORN TO PLAY.

IS IT HOT IN HERE
OR IS IT JUST ME?



Betty Hoss 2020

Executive Committee Report

The ExComm members and advisors (Sharron Armel, Michael Havelin, Grace Lehto, Will McGuffin, and Wayne Stanko) continue to confer as needed, via email and telephone, to maintain continuity in the group's activities. We agreed to go on meeting remotely until we agree it's safe to get together in person. As most of the active members of our group are categorized as "at risk" due to age and/or health, we will continue to exercise great caution.

Advertising: The group considered the pros and cons of accepting paid advertising on our website or in our newsletter, and decided against both. Other means of introducing members' hobbies and professions to the group are being explored.

Submitted by
Grace Lehto
Deputy Local Secretary

You may suggest topics for future agendas by emailing SharronArmel@gmail.com.

Treasurer's Report

Opening Balance at July 31, 2020.....	\$4,800.34
Receipts:	
Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy	\$120.85
Total Receipts	\$120.85
Disbursements:	
None	
Total Disbursements	\$.00
Closing Balance at August 31, 2020	\$4,921.19

Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Treasurer

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Membership Coordinator Position Open