

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 26, No. 11, November 2020

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

YOUR

VOTE

IS YOUR VOICE.

MAKE IT HEARD!

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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, except against the Editor (if you so choose). The Editor would be so very glad to hear from you that she will tolerate (but not necessarily publish) nearly anything!

**Events Calendar
November 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.



November Birthdays:



Larry Anmuth

J. Robert Bost

Earl Hunt

Jeffrey Patterson

& any others we've missed

December Theme:

Nearing the end of this very unusual year, we all have expectations for the coming year (or two... or four?) What's your greatest hope? Or maybe your greatest fear? Either way, what are you prepared to do about it?

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

Stay Safe ♦ Stay Healthy ♦ Stay Connected

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

Local Secretary's Message



Have you voted yet? Want to check the status of your registration and voting history? **Michael Havelin** alerted us to this useful website:

<https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>

Voting was easy for me this year. Deciding HOW to get it done, that's what took effort.

I tucked my Absentee Ballot in my pocket as Plan B. Plan A was in-person voting, if I could find an uncrowded site. About 7:15 on the first morning of Early Voting, I drove to the Grant Community Center in Southside (Asheville). In 2016 this tactic got me in and out with almost no waiting. This time, I couldn't even get into the parking lot – and that was 45 minutes before the place opened! So I drove to the Fairview Community Center with similar results. Heading home, I was thinking that someone should have invented a website that shows how crowded each place is, like the bar graph Google gives when you look up a restaurant. Then what do you know, Blue Ridge Public Radio told me that there IS such a website, a service of our Board of Elections. It's a map, showing each Early Voting Site and a count of how many people are in line! I watched it update frequently. (Other counties may offer similar services.)

<https://www.buncombcounty.org/governing/depts/election/election-early-voting.aspx>

Duly advised, I returned to the Grant center around 2pm, and found only 3 people ahead of me in line. Within 5 minutes of parking, I had my ballot, and 5 minutes after that I was out the door. I did not see any staff or voters without a mask. I did see staff cleaning the kiosks after each voter. The risk seemed minimal, and the reward – seeing my vote safely recorded – was great.

Before you hear from me again, we will probably know the results of our votes cast. Meanwhile, I'm cautiously optimistic.

December brings you another opportunity to vote – for your French Broad Mensa Executive Committee for 2021-22. Read more about that on page 9.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary
SharronArmel@gmail.com

Pandemic Poetry

Coronavirus
Tried to isolate the old.
Fooled you! We learned Zoom.
by *Ginny Pence*

Quilting alone sucks.
I ask houseplants for advice
On color palettes.
by *Sharron Armel*

Coronavirus
Presumptuous intruder
Stolen name from beer.
by *Ginny Pence*

There was an old lady from Asheville
Who grew sick of political pig swill.
So she got out the Vote
as the best Antidote
Limericks are hard.
by *Sharron Armel*

Regional Vice-Chairman's Message



Lots of news this month! First of all, **free Prior Evidence has been extended through November 30th**. Tell your friends and relatives to send in their documentation now and take advantage of this special!

The Referendum Petition Process opened October 1st, and will be open until November 15th. If you would like to see a change in the rules, get your petition placed on the national website now, so others can support you. The candidate petition window opens December 1st, so if you plan on running for a National Office, start polishing your resume. For the record, I plan to run again for RVC 5. First, there is a steep learning curve for the national positions, so it makes sense to aim for continuity. Secondly, because of COVID and the ensuing restrictions, I haven't been able to meet everyone properly yet, so I want more time. Would you like to apply for one of the appointed positions (like Communications Officer and Membership Officer)? Let me know and I will nominate you!

Finally, Private Testing is about to become a reality. The current system of volunteer, trained Proctors will continue; but American Mensa has arranged for a private testing company, **Prometric**, to offer the Mensa Testing Battery for a charge of \$99. (Current testing by Proctor costs \$60.) Candidates will have the choice now of going to a Prometric testing center to take the tests electronically; going to a test session with a Mensa Proctor; or submitting Prior Evidence. The National Office held an online webinar October 22 to explain the process, along with questions and answers. The webinar has been recorded and posted online for your benefit.

Registration has opened for the 2021 World Gathering (“Multifaceted Minds”) in Houston, TX from August 24-29, 2021.

The World Gatherings are held in August rather than July, in order to take advantage of the European holiday time. Join Mensans from

around the world to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Mensa's founding! Planners have already announced the speaker for the Gala Dinner – LeVar Burton!! (Remember? He was Lt. Commander Geordi La Forge in Star Trek.) To register, go to us.mensa.org, sign in, and click on “Attend.” The Colloquium on August 23rd will be Advances in Food Science. You can't go wrong signing up for that, too. Start saving up now!!

Because of COVID, the Leadership Development Committee has begun offering LDW topics online! As usual, Local Groups get points for each member who attends the LDW workshops. The first two were Being Assertive in Dealing with Problem Members; and Uncomfortable Conversations: Coaching and Firing Volunteers. The first is already available in video form on the national website (under Lead, then Leadership Development Workshops), and the second probably will be available by the time you read this.

There will be a special AMC Meeting on November 14th, held virtually and livestreamed on You-Tube. It is scheduled for noon to 2 PM Central time. More information and instructions for joining are available on the national website, us.mensa.org

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



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Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



Dear Gabbie,

America is a nation of immigrants, ain't it? What's the big deal with this President? He's from an immigrant family too.

Mayflower Descendant

Dear ...Flower,

If you think immigration is a problem now, just wait until the seas rise a few feet. It's gonna get pretty crowded up here in the mountains as everyone scrambles for higher ground. Hang onto your 2nd Amendment rights.

Gabbie



Nominating Committee Report

Will McGuffin, as Chair of the Nominating Committee, has worked with his team to put together a slate of Executive Committee Officers for 2021-22.

Watch your snail mail box for your ballot. You should receive it by mid-November, and must return the completed ballot to Will by December 15. Four Executive Committee members will be elected, and the results will be published on the FBM website and in the January newsletter.

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

Candidates for 2021-22 Executive Committee:

Sharron Armel (FBM member since 2012) Retired executive with several non-profits and charities, up and down the east and west coasts for 40 years, blissfully retired in Asheville in 2008, now pursuing a second career as a professional quiltmaker. Serving on the French Broad Mensa Executive Committee, and editing the *BROADCAST*, have been great fun!

Grace Lehto (member since 2008) Grace has served as Deputy Local Secretary for the past two years, and has filled many other roles in our organization. She took office with the objective of lobbying for more fun and laughter, and has lived up to that campaign promise. As before, she assures us that she has accepted no PAC money for this campaign.

Wayne Stanko (member since 1968) Wayne is one of the founders of French Broad Mensa in Western North Carolina, and has served as Local Secretary, Treasurer, Testing Coordinator, Scholarship Chairman, Newsletter Publisher, and nearly every other titled and untitled role.

SEE YOUR NAME HERE!!

Contact ***Will McGuffin*** for details.

Renewing Our “Bucket Lists”

Last month, ***Lan Sluder*** invited members to send in pictures, cartoons, poems, stories (or whatever), 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?

Will McGuffin: I miss all our get-togethers – first Friday lunches, trivia and all the other gatherings we used to enjoy. I am definitely an introvert to some extent but I used to have some choice in the degree to which I practiced my anti-socialism!

Lizz Russell: I miss my gym. I used to work out every morning. Now it's closed and gone and won't be back. I miss 24-hour Walmart. I used to do my shopping at 4 or 5 in the morning. It's no longer open then.

Lan Sluder shows us three of the things he's missing during the pandemic



1. My favorite bar -- the Ice Bar on Celebrity cruise ships (the bar counter is covered with ice, the better to keep your martinis cold).



2. Belize – the international airport was closed from early March to October 1 and restrictions on tourism remain in effect (negative Covid test, daily check in on app, only certain hotels and tours are open to visitors, etc.) This is a photo of the Bay of Corozal in Corozal Town in Northern Belize.



3. Live baseball -- this is "Ted E. Tourist" and live fans at an Asheville Tourists game at McCormick Field

Grace Lehto and **Sharron Armel** say
“Raise your hand if you miss hugs!”



Grace Lehto adds: I do miss hugs. And in anticipation of some date in the future, when it is once again safe to embrace my friends, I am planning a Hug-a-thon. My grape vines have really been forming lots of grapes and I will be making them into wine, which I intend to serve as part of the refreshments for the Grand Soiree for long empty arms.

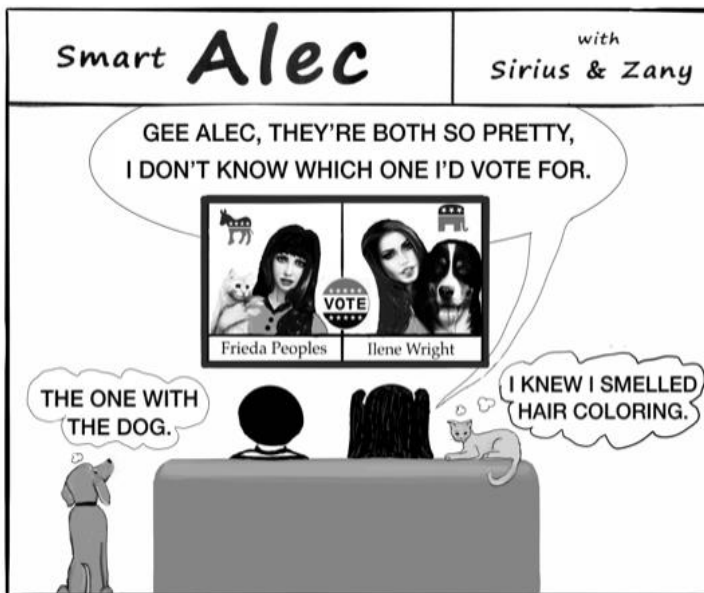
Karen Youket: I miss going out to dinner and having someone serve me, no cooking, no clean-up.

I miss going to the movies and being entertained.

And most especially I miss the swimming pool, the hot tub and the steam sauna at Gold's Gym.

Sharron Armel: I miss going to quilt retreats with a group of friends, at places like Lake Logan and BonClarcken. We descend like a cloud of locusts: we eat meals someone else cooks (and cleans up after), sleep in rooms where someone else has made the beds and cleaned, and most important, we sew and talk all day, working on our individual projects and soaking in inspiration from what others are doing. I need this to recharge my creative engine.

Pat Benard: What I miss during the Pandemic is going to the Dispensary every Tuesday evening to listen to Barry Stagg perform his original music, and visiting with friends while there.



Methods of Digital Deception Series:

Paid Influencers

by *Lizz Russell*

People who can get others to buy products are called influencers.

Marketing companies use influencers to promote products and services on the internet.

That is because the most powerful form of promotion is word-of-mouth advertising. Think of all the times you have read reviews or looked at ratings to determine what you will buy and who you will buy it from.

There are many ways that influencers operate.

One of the ways is by being or appearing to be popular.

Even though it is illegal, you can buy followers for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Spotify, TikTok, Twitch, and others. For example, right now there are organizations offering a million real followers on Instagram for a under \$100.

You can buy likes for Facebook, SoundCloud, LinkedIn, and others. You can buy 5-star product reviews on Amazon, Facebook, Google, TripAdvisor, Yelp, and so many more.

You can pay to get your information moved up in search engines.

Countless articles and "leaked" information are actually marketing companies using influencers to get to you.

There is no requirement to let you know they are paid influencers. They view you as a mushroom – keeping you in the dark and feeding you fertilizer.

One way to weed out some of the fakes is to simply ask yourself, "Would I say that about a product?" If the answer is no, it is probably a script from a marketer.

A related problem is that there are scammers out there who write HORRIBLE reviews about good businesses and then offer to clean up their reputations.

A way to check on a business is to go to the Better Business Bureau website and see what they say (<https://www.bbb.org>).

Do yourself the biggest favor and be skeptical of what you read.

Here's an article about the illegality of fake followers:

<https://www.cnet.com/news/selling-fake-followers-and-likes-is-illegal-landmark-settlement-finds/>

To see the extent of what's really going on, do a simple search in your favorite search engine for things like *buy followers* or *buy likes* or *buy reviews* or *business reputation scams*. Be amazed.



BUGS BEHAVING BADLY, Episode One:
Stinkbugs, Stinkbugs, Stinky Stinky Stinkbugs
by *Josie*



Stinkbugs are an invasive species that came here from Asia. They were first detected in the United States in 1998 in Pennsylvania. Their formal name is the brown marmorated stinkbug (*Halyomorpha halys*).

They are very destructive bugs. They gorge themselves on developing fruits and vegetables by plunging their needle-sharp stylets into any fruit or veggie – even soybeans, berries, and corn. Their chomping causes wounds that ooze and develop into brown, crusty blemishes. If you ever opened an apple and found brown spots inside, it was probably stinkbug damage. In addition, the wounds make the plants and trees more vulnerable to infections. They are responsible for millions of dollars in crop and harvest losses every year.

When the weather gets cold, stinkbugs head inside – anywhere that's warm. They hibernate like bears, but when stinkbugs do it, it's called diapause. Stinkbugs do not breed or feed during this time, but they sure can invade a space. There was a report of a small building the size of an outhouse having over 30,000 stinkers packed in for the winter.

These skunks of the insect world would like to move in with you. The good news is that they don't bite. The bad news is that they release a horrible compound that smells like rotting cilantro when you mess with them. Some people are allergic to SBRCC (Stinkbug Rotting Cilantrolike Compound). It can cause a runny nose and watery eyes. If SBRCC gets on your skin, it can cause dermatitis.

Stinkbugs in Asia have a natural enemy called the Samurai beetle. Samurai beetles mysteriously showed up in Pennsylvania in 2005. They probably followed the scent trail.

Here are some tips for you:

Repelling stinkbugs:

1. Make sure that all holes and cracks around the outside of your house are sealed
2. Check your screens and doors for holes or other ways in
3. Get rid of any drip spots around hoses
4. Dehumidify
5. Turn off outside lights and pull your shades – they are attracted to light
6. Don't leave fruits or vegetables in the open for them to eat
7. Put drops of mint essential oil into water and squirt it around your entryways
8. Put garlic powder into water and squirt it around your entryways
9. Rub your entryways with fabric softener dryer sheets

Removing Stinkbugs

1. They love to hang around the tops of curtains, by windows, and up high in cracks.
2. Do not squish a stinkbug. That will make them squirt long-lasting stinky stuff.
3. Use a vacuum
4. Put a bowl of water with a little dish detergent under a bright light. They will dive in.
5. If you cannot vacuum, take your bowl of water with the dish detergent and flick the stinkbug into the bowl. When you flick them with your fingernail, they fall down.
6. When all else fails, you might want to call an exterminator.

If you get skunked, mix some hydrogen peroxide with a few drops of dish detergent and a little bit of baking soda. Wipe it on or spray it, but don't use it on clothing. You can also use anything that works for skunk smell removal.

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. 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, and will not resume in-person meetings and events until safe to do so.

The group recently approved an annual budget for 2021, as shown on the following page.

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 August 31, 2020.....	\$4,921.19
Receipts:	
Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy	\$122.55
Total Receipts.....	\$122.55
Disbursements:	
None	
Total Disbursements.....	\$0.00
Closing Balance at September 30, 2020	\$5,043.74

Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Treasurer

French Broad Mensa Budget for 2021

	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Projected*	2021 Proposed	
<i>Income</i>						
Am Mensa Contribution	\$ 1,421.90	\$ 1,444.70	\$ 1,428.25	\$ 1,506.00	\$ 1,500.00	A
Special events	<u>0.00</u>	<u>104.00</u>	<u>\$ 280.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>200.00</u>	B
Total Income	\$ 1,421.90	\$ 1,548.70	\$ 1,708.25	\$ 1,506.00	\$ 1,700.00	
<i>Expense</i>						
Broadcast	\$ 200.04	\$ 357.87	\$ 263.28	\$ 107.00	\$ 300.00	C
Food	713.67	261.93	\$ 155.18	\$ -	350.00	D
Member recognition	155.08	79.00	\$ 158.00	\$ 237.00	250.00	E
Testing	159.01	36.78	\$ 14.80	\$ -	150.00	F
Special events	0.00	264.42	\$ 1,271.02	\$ -	600.00	G
Miscellaneous	<u>22.20</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>\$ 31.90</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>50.00</u>	H
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,894.18	\$ 344.00	\$ 1,700.00	
Net	<u>\$ 171.90</u>	<u>\$ 548.70</u>	<u>\$ (185.93)</u>	<u>\$1,162.00</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>	
Ending bank account balance	\$ 3,845.82	\$ 4,394.52	\$ 4,208.59	\$ 5,370.59	\$ 5,370.59	

- A. American Mensa Contribution: We receive a payment every month from the national office, based on our membership numbers.
- B. Special Events: Members who participate in special events pay a portion of the cost.
- C. Broadcast: Postage, bulk mail permit, labels, etc.
- D. Food: Meals for guest speakers, new members' discount, and group events.
- E. Member Recognition: Service awards for webmaster, editor, printer, etc.
- F. Testing: Travel expense for proctors, testing supplies, etc.
- G. Special Events: 2019 group events included expense (net of participants' share) for train caboose ride; 2020 may be a lower-cost event. *If the opportunity arises to send any ExCom members to a regional or other gathering, some of the cost can be covered by FBM; that may require a budget adjustment.*
- H. Miscellaneous: Check printing, supplies, etc.

*Projection based on 7 months.

Proposed by Sharron Arnel, Local Secretary
Approved by Executive Committee, August 2020

French Broad Mensa Contacts

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Region 5 Vice-Chairman

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Lizz Russell lizzz@dnet.net

Membership Coordinator Position Open