

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 26, No. 12, December 2020

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

Happy Holidays!



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Special GET WELL wishes to

Jan Stanko

Jan has returned home from hip surgery and rehab, and will continue treatment next week. You may send cards to her at 26 Greenleaf Circle, Asheville NC 28804-2320.

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
December 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.



December 15: Deadline for returning your ballots to elect the Executive Committee members who will take office on January 1, 2021. Ballots were snail-mailed to you in bright yellow envelopes, and should be coming into your mailboxes soon (if not already there).

December Birthdays:



*John Fishwick
Tommy Hooker
James Lesko
Kristen Olberz
Douglas Prater
Jamie Sullivan*

& any others we've missed

Stay Safe ♦ Stay Healthy ♦ Stay Connected

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

Regional Vice-Chairman's Message



Happy Holidays to everyone, whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or something else.

Most of these celebrations involve gift-giving. I have found that I get the most pleasure from helping a needy family make Christmas meaningful for the kids. Try it – you'll get a lot of satisfaction!

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. 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!

Registration has opened for the 2021 World Gathering

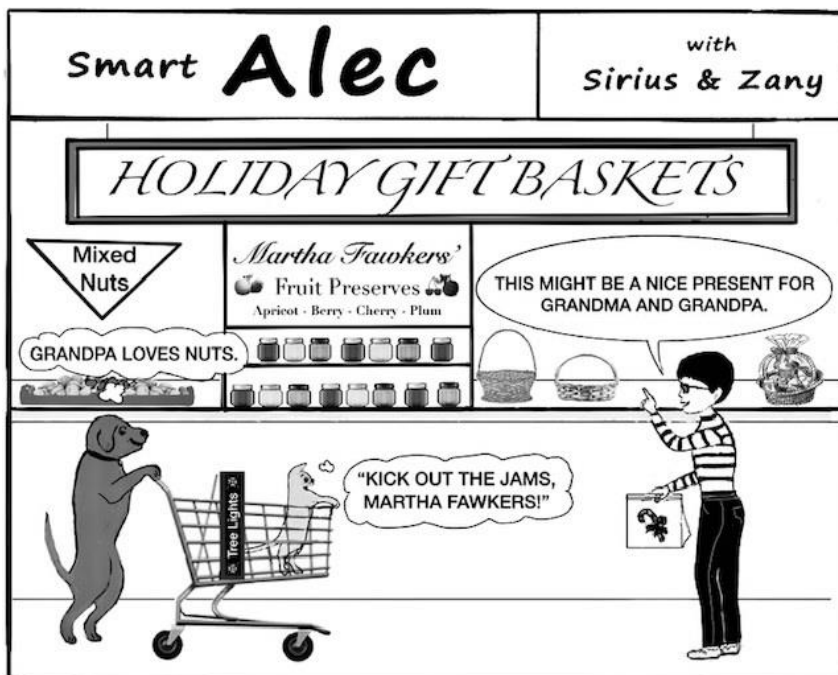
("Multifaceted Minds") in Houston, TX from August 24-29, 2021. To register, go to us.mensa.org, sign in, and click on "Attend." The Colloquium on August 23rd will be Advances in Food Science. You can't go wrong signing up for that, too. Start saving up now!!

If you missed the first two of the Leadership Development Workshops (online), they are available now as videos (under Lead, then Leadership Development Workshops). The first two were Being Assertive in Dealing with Problem Members; and Uncomfortable Conversations: Coaching and Firing Volunteers. The third, Digital Transformation: Electronic Voting was held on November 19th, and the video will be available by the time you read this column. Please sign up for these online workshops. Your local group gets extra points toward Jewel awards if you watch the live workshop.

The winter American Mensa Committee meeting will be held Dec. 12, 2020, from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Central time, virtually via GoToMeeting. The meeting will also be livestreamed on YouTube if you want to watch. This is one of our major meetings of the year, since we do a lot of our planning for the coming year at the winter meeting. Besides prioritizing our programs, we have several agenda items that will be of interest to the membership.



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



Bugs Behaving Badly: What's in Your Wall?

–Josie

One day I was sitting in a comfy chair reading a book when suddenly an insect flew into the corner of my eye and bit me.

Horrors! It was a ladybug! I squished it. It smelled really bad, like a stinkbug.

I was bewildered. I had never been attacked by a ladybug before. Aren't they supposed to be cute and adorable and the object of kitchen art?

A few minutes later, another ladybug attacked in the same spot . . . and then ANOTHER!!!! Did I have a tiny bug target on my eye?

My eye became infected, so I went to the doctor. The doctor said that the first ladybug obviously left pheromones. After a bit of research, I found out that ladybugs don't bite!

What bit me were multicolored *Asian Lady Beetles* (ALBs)—another nonnative species from the Orient. It turns out that American scientists started importing them back in 1916 in an effort to help protect crops such as soybeans and pecans. ALBs eat aphids, mealybugs, scale insects, and the larvae of our native, nonbiting 7-spotted ladybugs. Their voracious appetite helps reduce the need for pest-killing poisons.



Ladybug



Asian Lady Beetle

While these bugs are a blessing for farmers and our food supply, they are annoying for homeowners. They like to come indoors when the weather gets cold, just like stinkbugs.

Prevention and removal methods are very much the same as for stinkbugs.

To repel them from your home, spray entrances and windows with a mixture of water and vinegar or water and any citrus. They don't like the smell.

Make sure you have good weatherstripping.

Since they really stink and leave a stain when squished, use a vacuum.

Put some water and a few drops of dish detergent in a white bowl and shine a light on it. They will be attracted.



Methods of Digital Deception Series: Punycode Attacks

by Lizzz Russell

When the internet was originally designed, website names could only contain the letters of the alphabet, numbers, and hyphens. The letters and numbers allowed were the first 128 characters of the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII <https://www.ascii-code.com>).

Using ASCII created a problem for foreign websites, because their words sometimes use letters and accent markings that we do not use. For example, in German some words contain an umlaut or an eszett, such as M \ddot{u} hle or Stra β e.

In order to accommodate the *worldwide web*, an Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) standard was created. The new larger set of allowable characters is called **Unicode** (<https://home.unicode.org>).

Some characters from other languages look like letters from our alphabet. For example, the English letter “a” looks like the Cyrillic “a”, even though they are different.

Some of the letters in our alphabet that have foreign language equivalents are the letters I, E, A, Y, T, O, and N.

Websites names are converted to ASCII when you are looking at them with your browser. Punycode reveals these letters that can be confused.

A website such as *apple.com* that secretly contains a Cyrillic “a” shows up as *apple.com* in some browsers (such as Firefox and Chrome) but shows up as *xn-pple-43d.com* if punycode is turned on.

See it for yourself.

go to <https://www.punycoder.com>

type *xn-pple-43d.com* into the punycode box

click <<**convert to text** button and see what it says

How to protect yourself

The use of unicode is one of the reasons that you should never just click on a link in an email or that pops up on your screen. The link could take you to a website that is not what you think it is.

For your security, the best practice is to always open a browser and type in the website you want in the address bar rather than click on a link or a button.

If you use Firefox, type *about:config* in the address bar. Left-click *Accept the Risk and Continue* button. Type *puny* in the Search preference name box. Left-click on the box that has the left and right arrow so that the *network.IDN_show_punycode* option is *true*

If you use Chrome, download and install the *PunyCode Domain Detection* extension.

If you use Microsoft Edge, install the **IDN Safe** addon.

Safari will warn you if a website is using punycode deception.



Local Secretary's Message

Another election? OH NO!! I'm not rested up from the last one. This time will be a piece of cake: You're choosing your Executive Committee for the 2021-22 term.

Your ballot includes a survey question about the newsletter: Would you be willing to continue accessing it electronically only, even after pandemic precautions are lifted?

When you set up your profile on the American Mensa website, you were offered a choice between electronic and print formats. The default choice is "Print," but you can change that any time you like.

Choose "My Mensa."

Choose "My Membership Profile."

Choose "My Communication Preferences."

Edit "Local Group Newsletter" and select "Electronic."

Benefits: Saving trees, saving postage and related costs, AND you'll see your newsletters earlier than the print versions that are mailed.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

SharronArmel@gmail.com



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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 looked at the possibility of continuing our digital-only newsletter delivery. We learned that American Mensa requires a printed newsletter be sent to any member who chooses. For now, American Mensa has authorized all local groups to use digital-only for the greatest safety during the pandemic.

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 September 30, 2020	\$5,043.74
Receipts:	
Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy	\$120.70
Total Receipts	\$120.70
Disbursements:	
None	
Total Disbursements	\$.00
Closing Balance at October 31, 2020	\$5,164.44

Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Treasurer

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..... 828-989-6722 ... 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 lizzz@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 lizzz@dnet.net

Membership Coordinator Position Open