

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

# ***BROADCAST***

Vol. 27, No. 1, January 2021

<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, 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  
January 2021**

**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.**

***Stay Safe***

***Stay Healthy***

***Stay Connected***

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

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



Here's wishing everyone a Happy New Year – productive and COVID-free! Congratulations to **Mensa of Eastern North Carolina** and **South Coast Mensa** in Alabama, who tied for 13<sup>th</sup> in the Culture Quest games. This year was held virtually for the first time, but they scored big anyway! Kudos!!

January 15 is the deadline for candidates to apply for a Mensa scholarship, so come January 16<sup>th</sup>, the local Scholarship Chairs will

need volunteer judges. **Please make it easy for your Scholarship Chair by volunteering to read some of the essays.** The directions for judges are very clear. The only criterion for these scholarships is a 550-word essay outlining the candidates' goals and what they have done so far to achieve them – not grades, academic program, or financial need. This year there are several new scholarships – including one for First Timers (be the first in their family to complete twelve hours of post high-school education) and one celebrating racial diversity, for minority candidates. The Mensa Foundation Scholarship program awards more than \$140,000 in assistance every year to college-bound students, and this year there are more than 150 scholarships. Youth members are eligible for both national scholarships and one of the three Mensa Member Scholarships. Each participating group is guaranteed at least one \$600 scholarship; the top scholarship is \$5,000.

The candidate petition window is open until January 31<sup>st</sup>. Please go to the national website and sign in, and click on the candidates of your choice. You can even click for competing candidates: This round is only to say that you feel that they are qualified to run. You can vote for all of the national candidates, but only for the RVC for your Region, Region 5. That would be me, since I am unopposed. **Please click for me – I am only halfway there, and need your support!** Go to

<https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/amc/elections/candidate-petitions/petition-signatures/?id=BEC70BCF-6011-4486-BE720D6078EB693C> to support me. The actual election will run April 15 to May 15.

I can see light at the end of the COVID tunnel now (or is that an oncoming train?) I have the highest of hopes that we will be able to have the World Gathering this year in August, in Texas. Have you registered for it yet? Here's the link: <https://ag.us.mensa.org/>

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



### ***MERF Scholarship Judges Needed***

This is French Broad Mensa's eleventh year of participation in the Mensa Education and Research Foundation scholarship program. The awards are based on an essay of not more than 550 words describing the applicant's academic and career goals. Three judges are required to evaluate the essays. Judging guidelines are provided. The deadline for entries is January 15. The judging process will be online. The essays will be sent to the judges as a PDF. The judging forms are Excel files. If you would like to serve as a judge, please contact Wayne Stanko at 253-8781 or [wstanko@charter.net](mailto:wstanko@charter.net).

Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Scholarship Chair

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

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



*Dear Gabbie,*

*Your advice is so on the money all the time. Well, I need some right now. I've been a loyal Trumpian for a couple of years, but I'm tired of being lied to every day. But that's not my problem. My problem is the stock in my online store. I thought Trump would win the election, so I bought thousands of red baseball caps (with that "Hecho en China" label inside). This could break me. What should I do now?*

*Sincerely,*

*Struggling Capitalist*

*Dear Opportunist,*

*Ha, ha! You dork! Shoulda bought Biden bumper stickers and COVID masks. The earth shifted underfoot while you were standing there gloating. Serves you right.*

*Why don't you dye all the baseball caps blue and hire some land mine damaged Indonesian children to pull out the lettering embroidery with their tiny blistered fingers? Now that's a*

*Gabbie goes on...*

*constructive idea, doncha think? Or maybe you could have a big sale at the tRump goodbye rally. That might recoup some of your “wise” investment.*

*Next time, maybe you’ll see more clearly which direction the world’s spinning. Maybe you should quit trying to make it big time and get a job cleaning toilets at The White House. Good luck in your new career.*

*Laughing,*

*Your pal Gabbie*

*P.S. Don't ask me for advice again, y'hear!*



***Does Gabbie make you laugh?  
Does Gabbie make steam come out of your ears?  
Here's your opening – Tell Gabbie what you think!***

## ***Invertebrates Behaving Badly-- Hammerhead Worms***

By Josie

Yet another invasive species has entered the Carolinas from the Orient. It is the hammerhead worm. There are actually at least 5 varieties of these critters in North Carolina, and they can grow up to a foot in length.



They eat our beloved fish bait earthworms, slugs, snails, and they also eat themselves and each other. Their mouth is in the middle of their body.

If you cut one of these worms in half, you get two worms. The only way to get rid of them is to cover them with salt or vinegar.

If you touch them, they release a toxin that can make your children and pets sick.

Here is a recent video about hammerhead worms in the Atlanta area:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6wKeLjPzdE>

I think we should save the earthworms, for I would not want to tie one of these on my fishing line.





## ***Nominating Committee Report***

Thirty-five ballots were returned, and all four candidates were chosen on all ballots.

**Sharron Armel**  
**Johanna Dokter**

**Grace Lehto**  
**Wayne Stanko**

will serve as the French Broad Mensa Executive Committee for 2021-22.

Eight of the responses to the opinion question about the newsletter indicated that they still prefer a print copy. (more info below)

I thank everyone for their participation as this was a record ballot count for us.

Happy New Year!

Will McGuffin, Nominating Committee Chair

## ***Newsletter Format – Print and/or Electronic?***

In your profile on the American Mensa website, you're 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 choose a format.

American Mensa acknowledges the potentially risky personal contacts necessary to produce and mail a newsletter, and has authorized all groups to use an electronic-only format during the current pandemic. French Broad Mensa will resume sending printed newsletters when the national directive allows.

Sharron Armel, *BROADCAST* Editor

## ***The Kite***

*by Grace Lehto*

I'm talking about a quadrilateral with two sets of adjacent sides of equal length. You know, the kind of thing you fly in the air. I'd always wanted to try it. And it looked simple enough. Surely, even a klutz like myself could manage.

At the time, I was living with Rudy, a Czechoslovakian immigrant, a widower. In his twenties he'd been picked up for questioning by the police. It was during the time of the Russian occupation. They held him for nearly a week. He'd been sleep deprived, tortured and afraid for his life. When he was released, after searching for hours, he found his wife hanging dead in the square.

Rudy was a sad and bitter man who on occasion showed a better side. We lived up over his art supply store/mail box rental place in a tiny little place with no room at all to swing a cat. He taught me how to make French press coffee long before it was cool. And when sales were good, he would take me to truly fine restaurants.

But Rudy was no charmer. Potential customers would come in and ask if he carried Faber Castell pencils or watercolor paper and he was apt to reply, "You vant som-ting, you look. You don't see, I don't got. You got eyes, eh?" The customer would usually leave. The first time I witnessed this, I was there to pay the rent on my mailbox. It's what you do when you're homeless and need some kind of address for job applications. I told him he'd catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

Vhat?

You'd have more customers if you'd be nice to them. That's all I'm saying. Anyway, I'm here to pay my box rent.

"You vant to try? Tink you can do it. You stay here. Upstairs." By this time I had been coming in every morning and had even been given a cup of coffee while I sat with him and his friend Morgan. He knew I was homeless. And I knew he was broken. He told Morgan to mind the store and showed me the upstairs. A long cot and a much smaller cot. He'd had a dog but that was a long time ago. So we struck a deal. And

with the slope of the roof I'd have to be careful sitting up in bed. Still, it was a whole lot safer than the park. Even if it was a dog cot.

You got stuff? He asked. Ve go get.

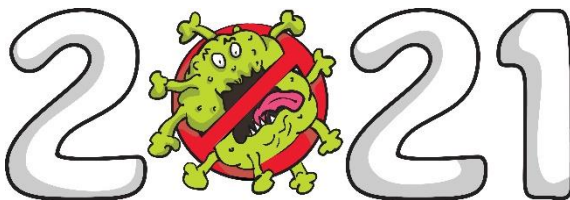
I've got everything with me.

And so it began. The store closed on Saturday at noon and was closed all day Sunday. Usually we went to the park and sometimes, when we could afford it, we'd go to a museum or have a hot dog. One kinda breezy day we saw kites flying in the distance and Rudy flashed one of his rare smiles. On the way home we talked about maybe making a kite. As the week edged from Sunday to Tuesday our kite took shape. Tissue paper from the art supplies downstairs. String and glue. Canvass stretcher sticks. We started watching the weather. That would be key.

We were in luck. Sunday was perfect. Rudy claimed to have experience in this kite-flying business so he took off first, scooping air into the kite until it was aloft. Then, he brought it down and let me have a turn. I ran with it and a gust of wind caught it. It went higher than I would ever have expected. I was laughing, delighted. But there was a sudden wind shift. Rudy tried to yell directions, but it was hopeless and the kite got tangled, broke loose, drifted a bit back towards us and then dropped straight onto Rudy's head. I rushed to him, afraid he was hurt. But he surprised me. It was the first time I ever saw him laugh. Not his usual half-hearted chuckle. A real laugh out loud. Longer than a guffaw and deep from his belly.

So you see, you just never know what's gonna happen when you kite a Czech.

And I never slept on the dog cot again.



## **Local Secretary's Message**



2021 will be better than 2020. *I insist!*

What kinds of things are you doing to make life a little better – for yourself, for the community, for the world?

A few months ago, the BROADCAST ran an article about *Johanna and Jan Dokter* building (and stocking) a “tiny library” at the corner of their yard.

Johanna reports that many people are enjoying it, taking a book, leaving a book, or both.

A friend and I spent some time this summer knitting winter hats to be distributed to Asheville’s homeless, through the Asheville Survival Program. Here are the first 43 hats.



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

# ***Methods of Digital Manipulation: Things That Pop Up On Your Screen***

*by Lizz Russell*

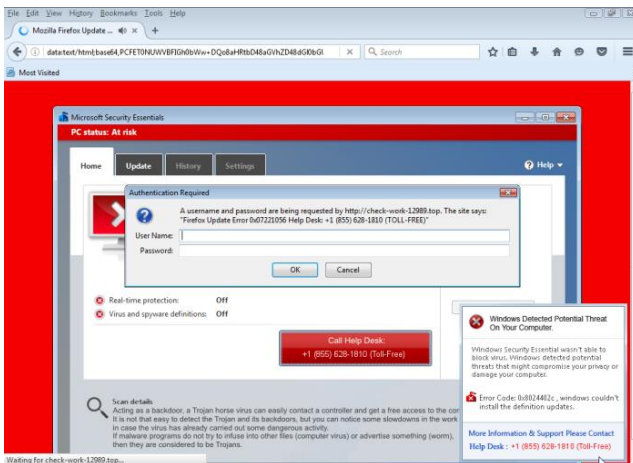
Cybercriminals LOVE to present you with popups, especially ones that look official.

Below is an example of the “**YOU ARE AT RISK**” method.

This is called *scareware*. There are thousands of variations of this, some even include bells and clangs and a voice telling you that something terrible is about to happen to your computer. You are supposed to get all excited and call the number on the message, and you won't be able to get rid of the screen. If you call the number, you have just succumbed to the dreaded *Tech Support Scam*. You will pay big bucks--often around \$600, they remote into your computer to install ????, and they put you on the sucker list. This scam happens so often that Microsoft has a page just for reporting them

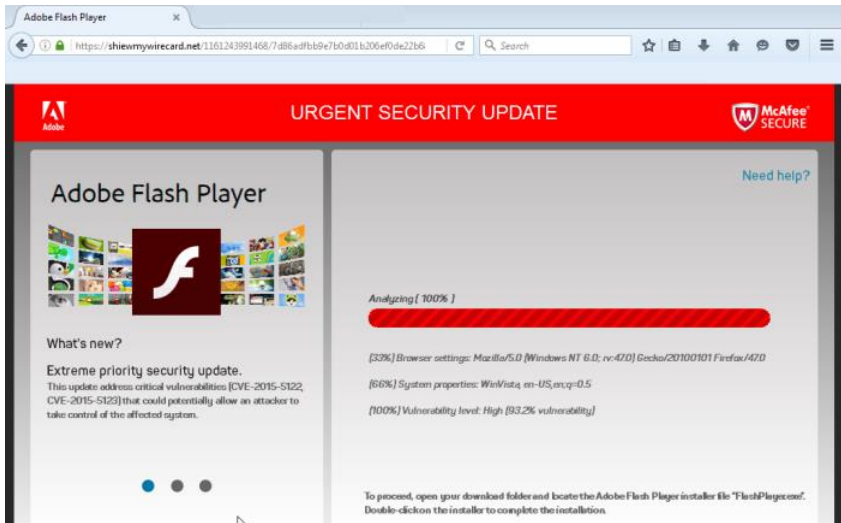
[www.microsoft.com/en-us/concern/scam?rtc=1](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/concern/scam?rtc=1) (It helps if you can provide the link to page, phone number, a screenshot, or other info. )

**IF YOU GET SOMETHING LIKE THIS, DO NOT CLICK ON ANYTHING!!! HOLD YOUR POWER BUTTON IN UNTIL YOUR COMPUTER SHUTS OFF (around 10 seconds).** When you turn your computer back, clear out temporary internet files.

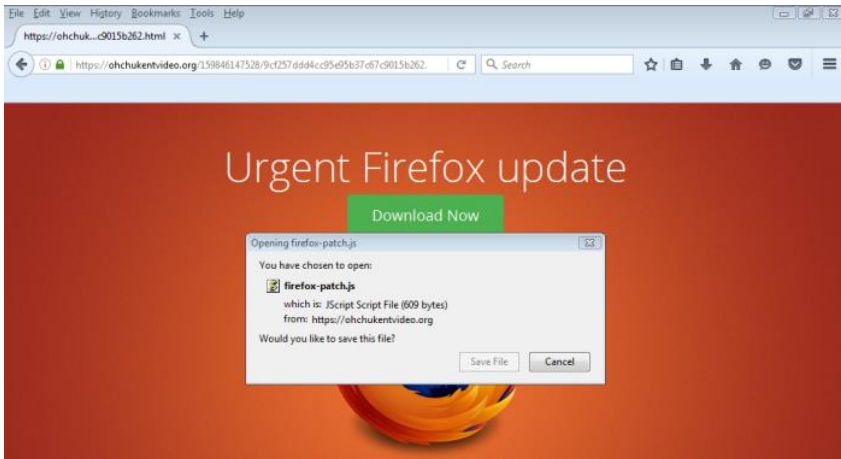


## The Fake Update Method

This might be the most common method of deception. It looks official and legit, doesn't it? But this one installs a virus. The giveaway is the url--it should be from adobe.com, not shiewmywirecard. . . .



Here's another ->



There are perhaps millions of variations of notices like this that tell you that you need to install a program or an update. So many of them are fake that I recommend NEVER clicking on an update or install a new program notice that pops up on your screen.

If the program you are using says it needs an update, open the program and then go to **H**elp on the menu. If **U**ppdate appears on the menu, or **C**heck for **U**ppdates, left-click on it there. If there is no Update listed, then click on **A**bout. If you have not yet found the update for the program, do a Google search for *How to Update Someprogram*.

For Windows 10 updates, left-click on the Windows button in the bottom left and then left-click on the gear or **P**C **S**ettings and left-click on **U**ppdates and **S**ecurity and then left-click on **C**heck for **U**ppdates.

If you need to install a program, go to youtube.com and look for *How to Install Someprogram* instructions. Plus, I always do a search for *someprogram problems* before I install anything.





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# Smart Alec

with  
Sirius & Zany



I'M WRITING A POEM FOR THE NEW YEAR.

WHAT'S A POEM?

SOME WORDS CAN RHYME, LIKE CLIMB AND L'CHAIM, BUT DON'T HAVE TO LOOK THE SAME ALL THE TIME.

Betty Hass  
2020

# Smart Alec

with  
Sirius & Zany



I'M MAKING SOME NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS.

I AM TOO.  
#1. DON'T CHEW ON THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

???

Betty Hass 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.

During 2021, we look forward to an environment that will allow us to enjoy some in-person gatherings.

Submitted by  
Grace Lehto  
Deputy Local Secretary

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



## **Treasurer's Report**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Opening Balance at October 31, 2020.....  | \$4,680.19 |
| Receipts:                                 |            |
| Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy .....           | \$120.15   |
| Total Receipts .....                      | \$120.15   |
| Disbursements:                            |            |
| None                                      |            |
| Total Disbursements .....                 | \$.00      |
| Closing Balance at November 30, 2020..... | \$4,800.34 |

Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Treasurer

## ***French Broad Mensa Contacts***

**National Office**...817-607-0090...[AmericanMensa@mensa.org](mailto:AmericanMensa@mensa.org)

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

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

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

#### **Executive Committee**

##### **Local Secretary**

Sharron Armel..... 828-280-6234 ... [sharronarmel@gmail.com](mailto:sharronarmel@gmail.com)

##### **Deputy Local Secretary**

Grace Lehto..... 828-575-2877 ... [gracelehto@yahoo.com](mailto:gracelehto@yahoo.com)

##### **Treasurer**

Wayne Stanko ..... 828-253-8781 ... [wstanko@charter.net](mailto:wstanko@charter.net)

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

Johanna Dokter ..... [johannadillo@gmail.com](mailto:johannadillo@gmail.com)

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

#### **Proctors**

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Carmen Jessup ..... [ciej@aol.com](mailto:ciej@aol.com)

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#### **Testing Coordinator**

Mark Crossley..... 704-798-3247 ... [mcrossley@qualman.com](mailto:mcrossley@qualman.com)

#### **Ombudsman**

Will McGuffin ..... 828-274-5050 ... [wmcguffin@gmail.com](mailto:wmcguffin@gmail.com)

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

Lizz Russell..... [lizzz@dnet.net](mailto:lizzz@dnet.net)

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