

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 27, No. 2, February 2021

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

***Have a
Happy & Healthy
February!***



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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
February 2021*

**In-person events will be
scheduled as soon as it's safe
to do so.**

**What would you think about
a late-summer picnic?**

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.

All regular and special events are open to members in good standing.



Stay Safe

Stay Healthy

Stay Connected

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

Regional Vice-Chairman's Message



Back in July of 2018, when my term as RVC 5 began, I wrote out a list of what I wanted to accomplish during the 2019-2021 term. I posted it on the wall behind my desk, so I would see it every time I sat down at my computer. By eight months into my term, I had accomplished several of them – first annual LDW, visiting ten of the twenty local groups in Region 5, encouraging the use of the Jewel Criteria as a blueprint to local group success, etc. Then – COVID happened!

I miss seeing you all in groups at RGs and at AGs. I miss visiting local groups and getting to know the very talented people who lead them. But mostly I miss the feedback that I got from these activities. So this year, I want you to help me compile a list of things that we want to accomplish in Region 5 during the 2021-2023 term.

Here are some ideas to get you started. Please, please email me and let me know which of these you strongly support, which you think are not worth the effort, and add anything else that we should address on the Regional level.

On the National level:

- Fix the national website. It is slow, quirky, and needs a search function.
- Find ways to make the Annual Gathering (AG) less costly to attendees.
- Help the National Office (NO) to understand what the Local Groups (LG) need.
- Review the idea of role-based distribution of data.

On the Regional level:

- Get 100% Scholarship participation
- Help Region 5 grow by at least 10%
- Continue to hold annual Leadership Development Workshops
- Train my successor so that they can hit the road running
- Help the five weakest groups to grow
- Urge Local Groups to hold Leadership Retreats to plan the upcoming year's activities

Surely you can add some ideas to these – and help me prioritize them!
I'm hoping to hear from YOU!!

I have the highest of hopes that we will be able to have the World Gathering this year, August 24 to 29, in Houston, Texas. Have you registered for it yet? Here's the link: <https://ag.us.mensa.org/> Prices increase again on April 30th. Get your COVID vaccination now so you will feel comfortable going. I'm scheduled for March 1st and 22nd. Call now to schedule yours!

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.



It's Gabbie again, and with a renewed (re-nude?) sense of porpoise for 2021. I've been doing a bunch of self-evaluation. I want to change my attitude (and altitude as well... 'cause the air is denser closer to the ground – recalculated for choking pollution and microscopic plastic particles). Honest. I want to be a better person, give better advice and all that sort of thing, give my cast-offs to the lumpen proletariat, and y'know... support humanity. So I'm gonna turn over a new leaf, in fact, an entire tree, maybe even a whole rain forest. I'll have to see how much work it is before I finally decide. But my intentions are good.

So from now on, it's positive, positive, positive. Hell, someone's got to try to save humanity, right? I've got all kinds of great ideas on how to improve things for us Homo saps. I'm gonna write about flowers in spring (sweet-smellers or even poison ivy), babies of all species (including those drooling, bawling human types - anyone have suitable-for-public-consumption marinade or sauce recipes?), puppies and kittens (more sauces needed for this category), and shorting out political minds.

And I've been thinking lots about astronauts and travel to other planets, too. Naw, I don't want to be one. I've read enough science

Gabbie goes on...

fiction over the years to know that a substantial percentage of our planetary explorers are going to be eaten by alien species soon after we arrive elsewhere. If they send only three, it'll be over quickly; if they send 50, some of them might survive long enough to create a garbage midden for alien archeologists.

So that's my plan for the unforeseeable future. Anyone want to join me in my misguided search for sanity in an insane world? Sign on the dotted line (and don't forget to include your membership number so we know whom to blame and can track you down).

Sig: _____

Mensa Membership Number: _____



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Bugs Behaving Badly: Emerald Ash Borer

By Josie

After the massive destruction of hemlocks caused by the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), another invasive species from Asia has arrived. It is called the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), also known as the Green Menace.

The Green Menace



This bug is attacking our ash trees. The crack of the bat that you associate with baseball games is usually wood from an ash tree (although some bats are made of maple).

It first showed up around Detroit around 2002. There is a chance that it will decimate ash trees.

There are five varieties in of susceptible trees in North Carolina. These include green ash, white ash, Carolina ash, pumpkin ash, and white fringetree. (Note: The Mountain ash is not susceptible because it is not really an ash tree.)

You can tell an ash tree by its leaves, which generally look something like this:



This beetle can spread naturally by flying, and it can also be spread by cutting timber or firewood. For that reason, there are quarantines in many counties in WNC.

For more information, please read this article from the North Carolina forest service.

https://www.ncforestservice.gov/forest_health/fh_eabfaq.htm



This guy is not a doctor.
He is a collector of the dead.
Don't get into his cart.

Michael Havelin

Point and Counterpoint

Don't Be Jabbin' me!

By Anony-mouse

You won't catch me letting a stranger poke me with a needle. I don't care what they say is in it. Here are some of the reasons I won't let 'em shoot me:

- I don't trust the government.
- I don't believe in vaccines.
- Vaccines cause autism.
- COVID is a Democrat hoax. Besides, COVID is also a Chinese bio-weapon.
- Science is anti-religion.
- I don't know where that needle's been. We all know about the shortages of medical supplies. Suppose they use a used needle?
- I don't know what's in that needle (except for the polyethylene glycol – also known as anti-freeze).
- I don't like needles, anyway.

Take Your Best Shot

By Michael Havelin, Homo sapien and Cynic

We're in the midst of a battle. As if climate change wasn't a big enough threat to life as we know it on this little blue ball, we're also under direct attack from Mother Nature. And guess who's going to win. She's won before, provable by this being the Sixth Great Extinction. Sure, the bigger assault is climate change driven by human interaction, but the immediate threat to us fellow humans is the COVID pandemic (the "God-damic" as I call it).

So here's my considered admonition. When your opportunity to get the vaccine comes up, take the shot! Don't be an idiot. Do what you can to keep yourself alive.

Yes, the vaccines were developed in record time, and you can thank science for that. As you may have noticed (I hope), there are a great many crazies running around loose and unsupervised these troubled days, but there are also a great many serious, thoughtful and talented people out there who recognize the world's problems and are trying to solve them. It's not a matter of national politics or nation against nation. It's all of us huddling together on the deck of the Titanic, the ship that couldn't sink. Forget the deck chairs. Get to the life boats.

I trust science. I trust those serious-minded and knowledgeable people who are hard at work trying to save us all. As of this writing, more than 429,000 of your fellow Americans are dead. Don't add yourself to that number. Take your best shot!

Local Secretary's Message



2021 drives our attention to HEALTH – the health of our world, the health of our government, the health of our economy, the health of our fellow citizens.

A good starting place is our own individual health. After all, “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” Several articles in this issue focus on issues and action that may improve your life!

Most County Health Departments have set up web pages to help you get immunized. ***Michael Havelin*** reports that Buncombe County’s site is up and working well:

<https://www.buncombecounty.org/covid-19/default.aspx>

Starting February 1, they’ll open the sign-up roster to people age 65 and over.

Helping others is an easy way to feel good while doing good:

- ♥ FBM Shout-Out to ***Fae Armstrong*** for crocheting dozens of warm winter hats for Asheville’s homeless.
- ♥ FBM Shout-Out to ***Johanna Dokter*** for delivering Meals on Wheels in these challenging times, and for her continued work as a Volunteer Income Tax preparer.
- ♥ ***Maria Douglas, Janis Durr, and Michael Havelin*** have volunteered to judge the MERF Scholarship essays.
- ♥ And I’m still making masks and sending them to the Navajo Nation.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

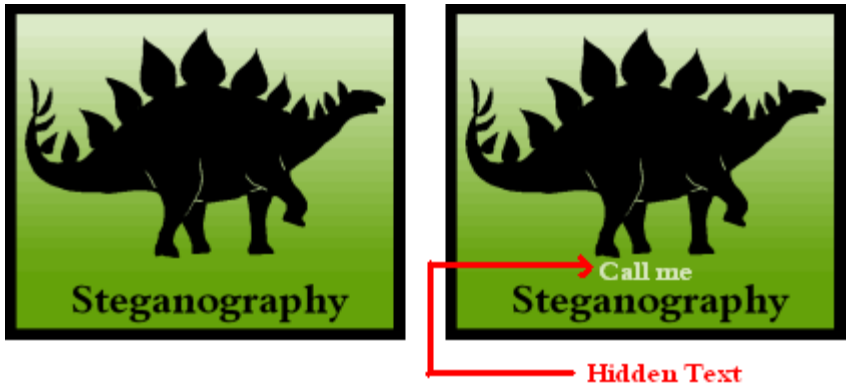
SharronArmel@gmail.com



Methods of Digital Manipulation: Steganography

by Lizzz Russell

Steganography is a method of hiding pictures, videos, text, and other things inside of another file, usually a picture or a document.



It can be used in a variety of ways. It can be used to send hidden messages. Criminals can use it to hide their evil programs. Some children use it to hide their pornography. There is an endless list of uses.

That is why security professionals tell you to turn off previews when reading email or when using Windows explorer. Just the simple act of previewing a picture in email is enough to infect a computer.

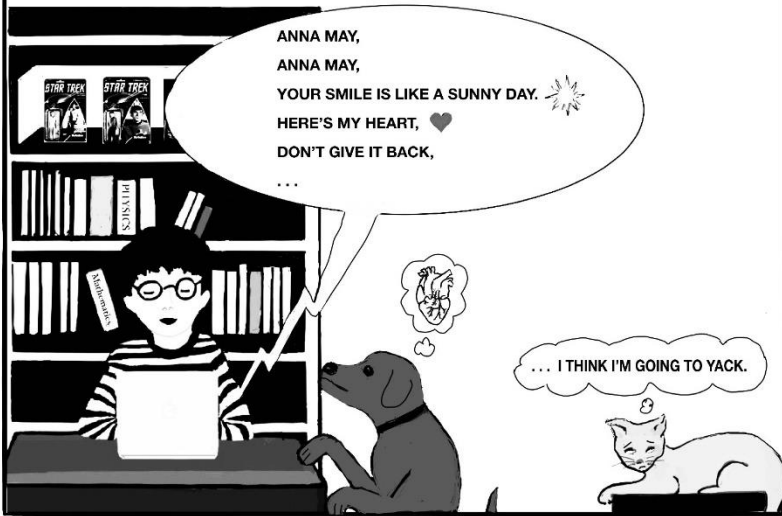
For your own security, do a search for “TURN OFF PREVIEW IN *yourprogram*” (e.g., ***turn off preview in hotmail***). You may save your computer from destruction by turning off the reading panes or preview panes.

If you use programs such as spreadsheets or word processing, you might also want to do a search for “Turn off macros in *yourprogram*” Macros are commands that are inside programs to do things like add columns of numbers. Macros can be used as another form of steganography.

If you want to know more, there are thousands of videos on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) about using steganography.

Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany



BettyHass 2021

Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany



BettyHass 2021

Executive Committee Report

The ExComm members and advisors (Sharron Armel, Johanna Dokter, 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: outdoor events, when we're graced with warm weather, perhaps a late-summer picnic!

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 November 30, 2020.....	\$5,287.69
Receipts:	
Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy	\$125.10
Total Receipts	\$125.10
Disbursements:	
None	
Total Disbursements	\$.00
Closing Balance at December 31, 2020	\$5,412.79

Submitted by **Wayne Stanko**, Treasurer

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