

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 27, No. 3, March 2021

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



My turn yet?

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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
March 2021*

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

**Late summer picnic is a
definite possibility!**

We'll let you know!

We want everyone to stay healthy. We'll resume regular activities as soon as practical.

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



Is it possible that life will be back to normal-ish by this summer? I've had my two COVID shots so I am ready to say, bring it on!! At any rate, if the AG will be held in person this year, I will be there. (It's scheduled for Houston, TX on August 24-29, 2021, because it is a World Gathering, not just the U.S. Europeans tend to vacation in August.) Have you registered for it yet? Here's the link: <https://ag.us.mensa.org/>

Prices increase again on April 30th, so register now!!

The next AMC meeting will be held virtually, in March. As usual, it will be available electronically live, as well as available as "Minutes" afterward. If you have a hankering to see your AMC in action, watch it live. The particulars will be available at least two weeks ahead on the National Website. If you are a real glutton for governing bodies, you can read the reports by every officer and committee chair for each quarter (and every Region, for that matter) at <https://www.us.mensa.org/lead/amc/meeting-reports/>

In the meantime, very little is happening in-person. Several Local Groups are already holding testing sessions with social distancing, masks, etc. But mostly, meetings are virtual, through Zoom, Go-to-Meeting, or other platforms. If you live far from your Local Group's main city, you are finally able to participate with other Mensans. The opportunities are there – there are games nights, movie-watch-parties, book clubs, social get-togethers, Bible studies, speaker events, even pub nights (BYOB) available online in a nearby group if not your own. If you are not participating in any Mensa events right now, it isn't because there aren't any available!!

Now I want to whine for a minute. In a normal year, we would be having four Regional Gatherings (RGs), one Annual Gathering (AG), Mind Games, and perhaps a Leadership Development Workshop (LDW). I would be visiting about ten of the twenty Local Groups in Region 5. My own group, Charlotte Blue Ridge Mensa, is very active

– ten to fifteen meetings a month. I am suffering withdrawal symptoms!! So – if you are one of the groups that I haven't visited in person yet, do me a favor: call me or email me and invite me to something local – an ExComm Meeting or restaurant meeting or the like. Call me now to schedule for the Fall, when this plague should be under control.

In the meantime, stay safe. Wash your hands frequently, wear masks, and avoid close contact. Get your COVID vaccination as soon as it is available in your area.

Can't wait to see you again in person!!

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

Local Secretary's Message



After asking last month if anyone was interested in having a French Broad Mensa picnic in late summer, I've received several positive replies. It all depends on the situation then, and our finding a safe outdoor location. I'm already looking forward to it!

This is the time of year that makes me glad for what we accomplished last year (staying alive, primarily) and what else we may look forward to in the coming days. Do you have any ideas of things you wish FBM were doing? Please do share your ideas, and we'll try to figure out a way to make good things happen.

Some good news from far away: **Bob Bouvier** says, from his new home in Texas, that he and **Leslie** are planning to attend the World Gathering in Houston this year. He asks if any FBMrs are going, and says "We'd luv to see ya!"

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

SharronArmel@gmail.com

Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



To All & Sundried:

Last month I told y'all that I was going to turn over a new leaf. Remember? Or is your mind failing like mine is? Anyway, I tried. Honest, I did. But the world is such an awful mess that I found it was impossible. I was starting from such a negative place that the task was beyond me. Still, I have some insights I'd like to share, so stick around.

To start off with, I'd like to applaud the World Wide Web and how it's made opinions and news easier to share worldwide. We can get instant news about the state of things nowadays, not just in our insular local communities, but all around the globe. The most obvious problem that comes to mind is that we can now learn at short notice just how really screwed up the human race is. By the way, there's only one human race, and that's us, you, Homo sapiens sapiens. Got it? Differences in skin color or bone structure don't really matter. The guy or gal next door is your cousin, somewhat removed perhaps, but a blood relative all the same.

Allow me to opine on The General Confusion. After careful (drunken?) consideration, I've come to the conclusion that the world isn't any more messed up than it's been all along. It's more

a matter of the speed at which we get the news of the most recent catastrophes. In past years, say from about 1,000,000 B.C. until the late 1990s, we each lived in our own little bubble. We had a vague idea of what was happening on the national scale, and maybe we were even involved in the local scene, but the larger world was just “out there” somewhere, and we knew little about what was going on unless someone started a world war, a hurricane hit, or a volcano blew itself up. Nowadays though, the news arrives instantly with the press of a mouse button, and if you don’t want to participate, the news will arrive anyway. We know right away about that coup on the other side of the planet or that Krakatoa and Yellowstone are building up for another major sneeze.

Human nature hasn’t changed. We’re still the same aggressive, acquisitive apes that we’ve always been. Our weapons are more destructive, but at least we haven’t used the Big Ones yet (stick around). And we haven’t learned to clean up after ourselves yet; when we make a mess, we abandon the debris and move on to find another clean spot to foul. When we get to another planet do you think we’ll act any differently? I doubt it. Just look at all the nuts and bolts and other debris in orbit around our benighted orb. Who’s cleaning up after us on the Moon? You think it’ll be any different on Mars or Europa? Get real.

And then there’s this COVID thing. It’s just a tiny snippet of RNA. No problem. Except that it’s proven to those who notice such things that we’re simply the same clever monkeys (with opposing thumbs) that we’ve been all along, just another bunch of mammals subject to Mother Nature’s whims. There’s a thinning of the herd that’s going on. Maybe you noticed, maybe not. It doesn’t matter; it’s happening whether you notice or not. I’m not saying that we’re doomed, but we’re being shown our mammalian vulnerability.

Gabbie goes on...and on...and on...

But now that the plague is receding because science has a vaccine, let's open up all the shops again, and the restaurants and theaters, and sports venues and other mass gatherings so that we can have another surge of sickness and death. It's about the money. We haven't learned a thing, have we?

So there you are, my "new leaf."

Gabbie, with apologies to those who follow

An Opinion

Maya Angelou wrote:

"We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike."

When I was a youngster, our TV brought in ABC, NBC, and CBS, and because we lived near two major cities we also saw independent stations WTTG and WBAL. There was a good chance that my friends watched some of the same shows I saw. That shared experience was usually positive. Even hearing a stranger in line at the grocery store comment on something Colonel Potter had said made me feel a sense of connection. Did you know that New York City experienced its greatest-ever-recorded dip in water pressure within minutes after the final episode of *M.A.S.H.*? Yes, we had shared experiences! And some of them were very good. But lately, most of our shared experiences have been negative: the pandemic, the election campaigns and their aftermath, to name a few. Now in the grocery store lines, I see a MAGA hat, a Black Lives Matter t-shirt, a Biden-Harris button, and a Q-Anon mask.

And I have to wonder how Maya Angelou's words can still be true.

Sharron Armel, Editor

Bugs Behaving Badly: A Real Life Mystery

By Josie

One day in my yard, I heard what I thought was a hummingbird. When I turned to look, it was a very large insect. It is quite a surprise to be expecting a cute little hummingbird and getting a giant bug instead.

It died in my driveway, so I took a picture of it.



After a tremendous amount of searching, I was not able to identify this bugger.

If you know what it is, could you please send an email to the editor sharronarmel@gmail.com

so we could share that information in the next newsletter?

Mensa Scholarships

This is the eleventh year French Broad Mensa has participated in the Mensa Education and Research Foundation scholarship program. The competition is based on an essay describing the applicant's goals and how they plan to achieve the goals. We received 21 essays this year. This is down from past years. Other groups reported the same experience. I suspect it has something to do with the covid-19 pandemic. One application was disqualified for placing their name in the essay.

The essays are scored by a panel of three judges. Many thanks to ***Janis Durr, Maria Douglas, and Michael Havelin*** for volunteering to judge the essays. The maximum score is 100. The scores ranged from 95 to 41. Due to there being several special categories of scholarships, we were able to forward 12 essays for consideration on the regional level. There will be at least one local winner worth \$600.

Wayne Stanko, Scholarship Chairman



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Methods of Digital Manipulation: Spoofing

by Lizzz Russell

Have you ever had your caller ID show that you are calling yourself?

OR have caller ID show that some law enforcement agency is calling ?

OR ... ?

The possibilities are endless.

Have you ever received an email from yourself that you did not send?

Have you ever received an email from a friend that was not from your friend?

These are examples of **Spoofing** which is a form of **wearing a digital disguise - a false identity**.

(Note: emails from yourself or a friend could also be the result of a hacker taking over the email account, which will be discussed in a future article.)

Most people avoid opening emails from someone they do not know; so showing you a familiar name or your own name will probably succeed in getting you to open the email or answer the phone. Even better, the trickster will hopefully get you to click on a virus installer or receive an advertisement. Most of the time, they want your money.

Always remember, never forget that anything that comes out of a computer, including phone calls, cannot automatically be trusted. This is called the ZERO TRUST approach to security.

So how can you protect yourself from spoofing?

1. NEVER use computers that contain sensitive or important data for reading email - Use a separate device such as another computer or a cell phone.
2. Turn off the preview/reading pane in email. To find out how, do a search for: *disable preview pane programname*
e.g., *disable preview pane gmail*

3. You can look at the email header which includes detailed information about how it got to you.

Here's a tutorial on how to get and analyze headers:

<https://mxtoolbox.com/Public/Content/EmailHeaders/>

4. Remove previous email addresses in emails that you want to forward. Here's how:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Remove-Previous-Names-or-Addresses-Before-Forwarding-Email>

5. Avoid clicking on links in emails, especially anything having to do with money.

If the email wants you to access your account, go directly to the site and sign in instead.

If it's from a financial institution or Government agency, you can also always call them on the phone.

Also, if the email involves transferring money, ALWAYS contact the people involved to verify the account number and amount. So many people have lost massive amounts of money by not performing this step.

6. Report spam, fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair emails to the Federal Trade Commission.

<https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2004/07/ftc-unveils-new-e-mail-address-deceptive-spam-spamucegov>

7. Screen your phone calls.



Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany

IF THE MOON IS
MADE OF CHEESE,
THERE MUST BE
LOTS OF MICE THERE.

ZANY:
IS THE MOON MADE OF CHEESE?

GOOGLE:
THE MOON HAS A CRUST OF
REGOLITH AND BASALT DEPOSITS.
THE MANTLE IS MADE OF SOLID
AND SEMI-SOLID ROCKS.
THE CORE IS SOLID IRON.

ALL I NEEDED
WAS
"YES" OR "NO".



BettyHass 2020

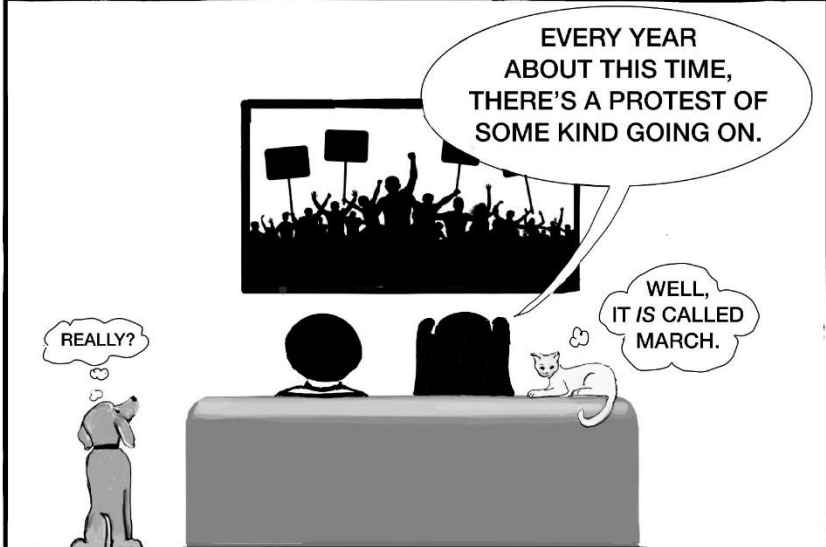
Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany

EVERY YEAR
ABOUT THIS TIME,
THERE'S A PROTEST OF
SOME KIND GOING ON.

REALLY?

WELL,
IT IS CALLED
MARCH.



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. Congrats to all who have received one or two COVID vaccine shots, or as *Pat Benard* calls them, “Fauci Ouchies.”

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 December 31, 2020..... | \$5,412.79 |
| Receipts: | |
| Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy | \$124.10 |
| Total Receipts..... | \$124.10 |
| Disbursements: | |
| None | |
| Total Disbursements | \$0.00 |
| Closing Balance at January 31, 2020 | \$5,536.89 |

Submitted by *Wayne Stanko*, Treasurer

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