

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 27, No. 4, April 2021

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



In this issue

April 2021 Events.....	3
Regional Vice-Chairman’s Message.....	4
Local Secretary’s Message.....	5
Twin Towns.....	6
Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie.....	7
Signs of the Times.....	10
Star Light, Star Bright.....	11
Optimism.....	12
Methods of Digital Manipulation.....	13
Prepper Notes.....	14
Smart Alec.....	15
Executive Committee Report.....	16
Treasurer’s Report.....	16
Contacts.....	17



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
April 2021**

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

August picnic is planned!

We'll keep you updated!

Monday, April 5, 11:30am: Executive Committee Meeting

At Tupelo Honey South, 1829 Hendersonville Road in Asheville

Reservations required by March 31; contact SharronArmel@gmail.com

Thursday, April 15 through May

15: Vote for American Mensa

officers. Pay your dues by March 31 to be eligible to vote. Don't forget, our RVC-5, Nancy Campbell, is on the ballot for re-election.



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



Election season is upon us once again, and the ballot is crowded this year. There are two candidates for Chair: LaRae Bakerink and Timmy King; two for First Vice Chair: Peter DuDeck and Lori Norris; and four for Second Vice Chair: Antonio (Toni) Belarmino, Angela Christie, David McCallister, and Robert Salkin.

There are two candidates for Treasurer, Taz Criss and James Winschel .There is only one candidate for Secretary, Ian Randal Stroch, so he has been declared the new Secretary .I am still the only candidate for RVC 5, so I hope you have been satisfied with my work as RVC 5 .The voting period runs from April 15 to May 15, and you must be a paid member as of March 31 in order to vote.

As John Voymas, RVC 4, explained it, “Mensa uses a method called preferential voting (also known as ranked-choice voting). When you vote for Second Vice Chair, you will indicate your preference of candidate and rank them from 1 (first choice) to 4 (last choice). You do not have to rank all four - you could just put 1 by your first choice and 2 by your second choice and stop there. If no candidate gets over 50% of the vote, the fourth place candidate's ranked votes will be distributed to the other three candidates based on the ranking of the other three candidates on ballots which chose the fourth candidate as their first choice. This method saves time and money by only having a single ballot which can be used for runoffs when no single candidate gets a majority of the votes.”

There is one proposed Bylaws Amendment that will be on the ballot. Currently, elected AMC terms are for two years. The proposed amendment is to change that to terms of three years, as International Mensa has done. There will be more information in the Mensa Bulletin.

Have you registered yet for the World Gathering scheduled for Houston, TX on August 24-29, 2021? (It is a World Gathering, not just the U.S., and Europeans tend to vacation in August.) Here's the link:

<https://ag.us.mensa.org/>

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

Stay safe and wear your mask!!

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

Local Secretary's Message

Take a deep breath and imagine some of the things we may be doing soon, for the first time in over a year: meetings, a summer picnic, riverside cleanup, other outdoor adventures. I'm eager to see FBM friends in person. As ***Michael Havelin*** says, "It'll be like meeting all new people again."



Fae Armstrong says she's glad to see that more and more of us are getting vaccinated, and hopes to start getting together again soon. First Friday lunches? Discussion group? Let Fae know what you think!

one4fae2@yahoo.com

Karen Youket pointed out Tom Hooker's fiction article, "The Rendezvous," in the February American Mensa Bulletin. Check it out:

<https://pubs.royle.com/publication/?m=28885&i=691185&p=36>

Despite our forced distancing, Mensa still works for you! Our Regional Vice Chairman ***Nancy Campbell*** recently helped a member who had not received his membership materials after renewing. ***Wayne Stanko*** answered a request for advice from a local family whose 5-year-old daughter just got accepted into Mensa. Thanks to both of them!

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

SharronArmel@gmail.com

Twin Towns

Lizz Russell, FBM's SIGHT Coordinator, shares this message from Bill Zigo, the National SIGHT Coordinator.

“You may have already heard a little bit about Twin Towns, as it is already has some publicity. It was started the 2nd half of 2020 by a number of Mensa International SIGHT Coordinators, as an activity to keep SIGHT and Mensans involved when we weren't necessarily traveling as much.

“Twin Towns will pair two Mensa "towns" from different parts of the world for opportunities to socialize online. A "town" can be a Mensa community of any size, whether it be a big city, a medium-sized city, a chapter, or a group of adjacent small chapters. Last November, we had a trial run of the project and selected 4 pairs of cities. Of these, one pair that was selected and started was between New York City and Paris. That pair now meets monthly .Other countries already participating include France, Serbia, Finland, Australia, and Taiwan. More recently, Boston Mensa began a twinning with Mensa Ireland .The trial run was considered successful, and shortly an international panel will be set up to coordinate requests and pairings.

“To answer a couple of preliminary questions: To participate, you probably need a critical mass of at least 12 active Mensans, but more is always better. You would want to meet at least once a month, possibly more often if there is interest. There is no requirement to use any particular program for it - most pairs are currently using Zoom, but we have also discussed use of Discord, Google Meet, jit.si, and perhaps others as we learn of them.”

What town (anywhere in the world) would you choose for our partner?

Please contact **Lizz** at lizz@dnet.net with questions, or better yet, to express an interest in participating!

Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



To All:

Our Beloved Editor told me there was going to be a discussion and analysis of pessimism and optimism by Lizzz and Herself in this issue, so I figured I'd better weigh in on this one. Let's start off with some definitions. The openers are from that incorrigible 19th Century philosopher and misanthrope, Ambrose Bierce.

OPTIMISM, n. The doctrine, or belief, that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly, everything good, especially the bad, and everything right that is wrong. It is held with greatest tenacity by those most accustomed to the mischance of falling into adversity, and is most acceptably expounded with the grin that apes a smile. Being a blind faith, it is inaccessible to the light of disproof—an intellectual disorder, yielding to no treatment but death. It is hereditary, but fortunately not contagious. – Bierce

OPTIMIST, n. A proponent of the doctrine that black is white. – Bierce

PESSIMISM, n. A philosophy forced upon the convictions of the observer by the disheartening prevalence of the optimist with his scarecrow hope and his unsightly smile. – Bierce

Here are a few more tidbits:

PESSIMIST, n. A well-informed optimist. – Anonymous.

“The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true.” – James Branch Cabell, The Silver Stallion

“A pessimist is a man who thinks everybody is as nasty as himself, and hates them for it.” – George Bernard Shaw

“The man who is a pessimist before 48 knows too much; if he is an optimist after it he knows too little.” – Mark Twain

“I will be the first to admit that I am a pessimist by nature. It is, after all, the wisest way to be. We pessimists have everything to gain, whereas optimists have a fifty-fifty chance of being disappointed.” – Tamar Myers, As the World Churns

But you wanna know what I think, doncha?

I just think the Earth, beautiful as it was and crawling with Life, is a dangerous place to live, even temporarily. Just look around yourself.

Earthquakes are quaking, tornadoes are tornading, hurricanes are a'blowing, the seas are rising slowly but inexorably, micro-plastics are ubiquitous, mosquitoes distribute gifts of ghastly disease, your defective genes are working against you, you can't breath water when you're washed away in the torrent from a burst dam (no doubt constructed by the low bidder), or you might could end up immortalized in a mud slurry.

And still Gabbie goes on...

Even the good stuff ain't so good. Round-Up kills poison ivy and then hangs around to kill you. War is on the horizon, but luckily, both sides are too scared of the consequences to start a fight, occasionally, there's a pandemic (call it what it is: a G-damic!). And most terrifying of all: the actuaries are after you!

Feel better now? Feel optimistic? Fools! Get real! Listen to Mark Twain (see above).

Your Favorite Cynical Optimist,

Gabbie



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Signs of the Times

Toilet Paper Math is hard:



Back in my day, there was literally so much toilet paper that people would string it on the trees of their enemies!

Star Light, Star Bright, or Are You Just a Satellite?

by Josie

You might want to get out and admire the night sky so you can have a beautiful memory for the future.

There are new technologies that may take your view away.

Low Earth Orbit Satellites (LEOs) are being launched at a phenomenal pace by billionaires such as Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Richard Branson

Here is an interesting background article about LEOs.

Why Low-Earth Orbit Satellites Are the New Space Race

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-low-earth-orbit-satellites-are-the-new-space-race/2020/07/10/51ef1ff8-c2bb-11ea-8908-68a2b9eae9e0_story.html.

According to this article: <https://www.space.com/spacex-starlink-18-satellites-launch-rocket-landing>

“SpaceX has deposited more than 1,000 Starlink satellites into orbit, and there could eventually be tens of thousands of spacecraft in the network.”

For those of you who use telescopes, LEO satellites can interfere with skywatching. Astronomers complained, and the SpaceX satellites were dimmed down.

SpaceX's Dark Satellites Are Still Too Bright for Astronomers

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/spacexs-dark-satellites-are-still-too-bright-for-astronomers/>

Take a look at what a string of satellites looks like in the night sky:

<https://cdn.mos.cms.futurecdn.net/uwxXhvy8WC2ukLTMERQeee-970-80.jpg.webp>

But wait, there's more... Space Billboards may be coming to a sky near you.

Billboards in Space?

<https://upfront.scholastic.com/issues/2019-20/090219/billboards-in-space.html>

What do you think?

Optimism

The CEO took the podium and began to speak: “Welcome to all who have come today to honor Sharron Armel with this award.”

He went on to say that he’d recently met my mother and spent some time learning about my earlier life. “Everyone knows Sharron is an optimist, but do you know how much of an optimist she really is? Her mom told me this story...”

Sharron’s parents became concerned about her twin brother’s extreme pessimism. [At this, a nearby colleague whispered “I thought you were an only child!” I shrugged in puzzlement. I am.] Johnny just couldn’t seem to find the bright side the way Sharron did. So they decided to even out the imbalance. As the twins slept on the night before their next birthday, Mom and Dad filled Johnny’s room with wall-to-wall gifts. In a corner of Sharron’s room, they piled a huge load of horse manure.

They woke the next morning to the sound of Johnny crying. Rushing into his room, they found him sitting in the middle of his bed, sobbing. “These presents can’t all be for me. Somebody must have put them here to play a mean trick on me. And even if they are for me, I’ll probably break them. This is the worst birthday I’ve ever had!”

From Sharron’s room they heard singing, and went in to see her sitting on the floor, digging through the massive pile. She gave them a big grin and said “With all of this horse poop, there must be a pony in here somewhere!”

Methods of Digital Manipulation: Browser Hijacking by Adware

by Lizzz Russell

Your browser is the program you use to go to the internet. Some examples of browsers are Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Chromium, Opera, Brave, and many, many more .(NOTE: MICROSOFT SAYS - DO NOT USE INTERNET EXPLORER ANY MORE)

Advertisers and thieves want to control your internet experience to their advantage. One of the ways they do this by changing your browser settings.

Did you ever open your browsers and it suddenly opens to a new page that you never saw before or a whole bunch of new icons appear on the page or you have a new toolbar or your internet is suddenly much, much slower (due to advertisers spying on you)?

Chances are excellent that your browser has been hijacked .

Hijackers often get in from map, recipe, game, music, and format conversion websites. They will tell you that they will protect your searches or that they will help you find coupons or that you need a new media player. The tricks are endless.

According to ppcprotect.com, “the average person is now estimated to encounter between 6,000 to 10,000 ads every single day.

[\(https://ppcprotect.com/how-many-ads-do-we-see-a-day/\)](https://ppcprotect.com/how-many-ads-do-we-see-a-day/)

That's obviously not enough. You need more, and you can get more with a hijacker.

One adware hijacker that I have seen hundreds of times over the years is called Conduit. It is usually installed without your knowledge, and it shows up as a toolbar or a search engine. If you see Conduit as your search engine or conduit.com in your address bar, do a search on how to get rid of it.

Another group of hijackers that I have seen so many times is from Mindspark. If you see Mindspark, something you probably do not want has snuck into your computer.

Sometimes the hijackers install programs that you can remove in the way that you would normally remove programs. Sometimes the hijackers install extensions or add-ons. This is an important place to check in your browser. For example, Firefox and Chrome add-ons and extensions are easy to find by left-clicking on the Open Menu icon.



I personally do not use any add-ons in my browsers.

The best thing to do is a search to find out the specific removal procedure.



Prepper Notes

by Bea Reddy

What would you do if one of our enemies launched a nuclear attack on us?

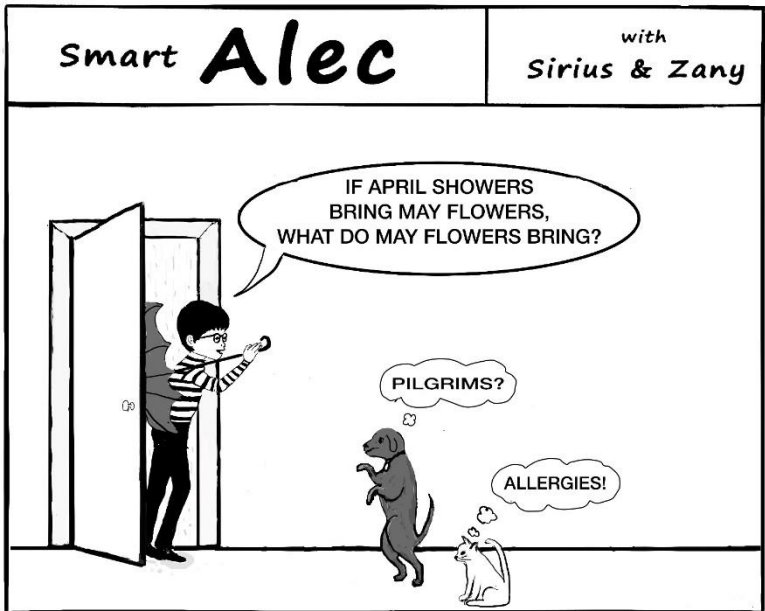
Advice from our Government

<https://www.ready.gov/nuclear-explosion>

In addition, you need to order some 130 mg Potassium Iodide pills. Potassium iodide blocks your thyroid from absorbing radiation .



BettyHass 2021



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're looking forward to our first in-person meeting of the year in April.

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 appropriate caution, to strike a balance between reconnecting and staying safe.

An August outdoor picnic is being planned. Watch for details!

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 January 31, 2021		\$ 5,536.89
Receipts:		
Am. MENSA Monthly Subsidy	\$ 124.10	
Total Receipts		\$ 124.10
Disbursements:		
Webmaster annual dues	\$ 79.00	
Total Disbursements		\$ 79.00
Closing Balance at February 28, 2021		\$ 5,581.99

Submitted by **Wayne Stanko**, Treasurer

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Membership Coordinator Position Open



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