

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 27, No. 9, September 2021
<http://frenchbroad.us.mensa.org>



Pillars of Creation

Credits: NASA, ESA and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)

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Cover Art:

Pillars of Creation

Photos from the Hubble Telescope

(See story on page 7.)

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.

**FBM Events Calendar
September 2021**

Friday, September 3, 11:30am: First Friday Lunch

at TGI Friday's, 115 Hendersonville Rd in Asheville
We will dine outside on the patio.

If you plan to attend, contact Fae Armstrong
one4fae2@yahoo.com or (828)575-0121

Monday, September 6, 11:30am: Executive Committee Meeting

at Grace Lehto's home, 25 Hopedale Circle in Asheville

Reservations required by Sept. 3; contact SharronArmel@gmail.com

Thursday, September 23, 6:00pm: Thu.D!

at Luella's Barbeque, 501 Merrimon Avenue in Asheville

Reservations required by September 20; contact
SharronArmel@gmail.com



All regular and special Mensa events are open to members in good standing. RSVPs are important for table planning, and many public eateries are still being cautious about capacity. Please respond if you plan to attend an event. If you don't, we might not be able to seat you.

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

A Non-Mensa Event of Interest:

Chautauqua is one day only this year: September 11 at 2 p.m. at the Morris Pavilion at Warren Wilson College. This is a covered outdoor facility.

There will be two women portrayed: Rosa Parks and Hedy Lamarr. The tickets are free, but you must get them in advance. Go to historycomesalive.org/performances/buncombe/ to get tickets.

Submitted by Wayne Stanko

Regional Vice Chairman's Message



As I write this, the World Gathering has not happened yet – it is next week – and I wish that I could write about that. I'll be giving a talk on "Getting Area Groups Started" as part of the Leadership Development Workshop offerings. It is in the Powerpoint format, and if you would like a copy, just ask and I will send it. I'll also host a Region 5 Meet and Greet.

This has been a strange time. Last month, there were about 1,500 attendees expected at the World Gathering, but people have dropped

out like flies as the cancellation deadline approached, so the count is now about 700. (For comparison, Chicago Mensa's annual Hallowe'em usually has about 500 attendees.) LeVar Burton has dropped out as Keynote Speaker for the Gala Dinner, and been replaced by Frank Abagnale. The National Office just announced that attendees will be expected to wear masks and observe social distancing at all times except when eating, which is a good thing since Houston, the site of the event is a hotbed of COVID. As much as I dislike masks, I have to agree that this was the right decision if we hope to minimize the chance for World Gathering 2021 to become a Super Spreader Event.

I'm going anyway, in spite of the fact that my age makes getting sick with COVID a dangerous affair. If you have ever been to an Annual Gathering, you understand. Even in the hotel lobby, the conversation is Mensa-level. There are over 100 seminars on topics ranging from "2030: How AI and Robots Will Transform Our Way of Life in the Coming Decade" to "Reclaiming Our History: Barbara Smith Conrad, Integration at the University of Texas, and the Opera Casting Incident." The Hospitality Room is open 24/7 at most Annual Gatherings, with snacks and games and always, great conversations. There are Bridge Tournaments, Sudoku Tournaments, and N64 Mario Kart Tournaments. There are always three or four jigsaw puzzles out working, and some people pass and add two pieces, while others sit and work the puzzles for hours.

Have I whetted your appetite for a Mensa Gathering? Good! There are two Regional Gatherings coming up in Region 5:

Mensa in Georgia is hosting Peachtreat 45 in Duluth, GA (outside Atlanta) from September 10 to 12. Register at <http://ga.us.mensa.org/generalinfo.html>

Finally, Charlotte Blue Ridge Mensa will hold their annual RG November 12-14, 2021. Register at <https://cbrmensa.org/rg/>

Nancy Campbell, RVC5

Local Secretary's Message

French Broad Mensa is still strong! By mid-August, we had 126 members. We welcome new, returning, and rejoining members:

Bradley Taylor of Asheville and *Phyllis "Frankie" Franklin*, also of Asheville, have moved into our area.



Happy September birthdays to

Martin Davis

Carl Edwards

C. Dawn Hardin

Alison Lee

Steven Lerner

Franklin McGowan

Sally Reid

Anna Whisnant

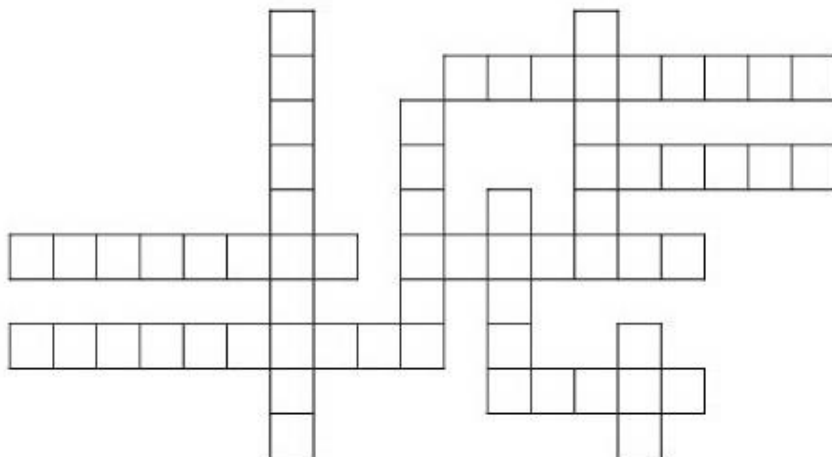
We've resumed several monthly events: First Friday Lunch, fourth Thursday Dinner (Thu.D!) and will strive to continue as health safety issues change. Do you know of a restaurant that we might try? We're looking for outdoor seating, ample parking nearby, reasonable prices, and (of course) good food. We'd like to try some new places, maybe in your neighborhood, so all suggestions are welcome.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

SharronArmel@gmail.com

Back to School
(a Crossword Picture Puzzle)

The clues are in the picture!
 The solution is near the Treasurer's Report.



Hints:

A A A A A B B B C C C C D E E E E E E I I I L L L L L N N N
 N O O O P P P P P P R R R R R R R R S S S S T T U U U Y

Pillars of Creation

submitted by Will McGuffin

These towering tendrils of cosmic dust and gas sit at the heart of M16, or the Eagle Nebula. The aptly named Pillars of Creation, featured in this stunning Hubble image, are part of an active star-forming region within the nebula and hide newborn stars in their wispy columns.



Although this is not Hubble's first image of this iconic feature of the Eagle Nebula, it is the most detailed. The blue colors in the image represent oxygen, red is sulfur, and green represents both nitrogen and hydrogen. The pillars are bathed in the scorching ultraviolet light from a cluster of young stars located just outside the frame. The winds from these stars are slowly eroding the towers of gas and dust.

Stretching roughly 4 to 5 light-years, the Pillars of Creation are a fascinating but relatively small feature of the entire Eagle Nebula, which spans 70 by 55 light-years. The nebula, discovered in 1745 by the Swiss astronomer Jean-Philippe Loys de Chéseaux, is located 7,000 light-years from Earth in the constellation Serpens. With an apparent magnitude of 6, the Eagle Nebula can be spotted through a small telescope and is best viewed during July. A large telescope and optimal viewing conditions are necessary to resolve the Pillars of Creation.

Credits: NASA, ESA and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)

Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



Dear Gabbie,

I've been thinking a lot lately, I mean, trying to think, but with the video games taking up so much of my time, and having no inflow and lots of outgo, not to mention not understanding my kid's online math problems, it just don't make no sense to get a shot of some government-sponsored science juice that's been proven to poison people's children, y'know wadda mean, huh?

Your Most Loyal Reader

Dear Your (the) Most,

I get so tired of responding to all the thoughtless queries that come in over the transom from cretins like you. Doesn't anyone think anymore before they speak or attack the nearest keyboard? Why am I so blessed? What horrible atrocities did I commit in past lifetimes (if you believe in that kinda stuff) to deserve my current suffering?,

To be honest, I don't have an answer to your rather garbled question. It was a question, wasn't it? It had a question mark at the end, so I feel moderately safe making that assumption. No, I don't have an answer and now I've got a problem because I have nothing sage to impart in my monthly column. But that attitude would be like giving up, wouldn't it?

Gabbie goes on...

I'm an American and it seems that we, as a sub-species, are too damn dumb to give up in the face of ultimate devaluation, depression, denunciation, denigration, depletion, depopulation, deportation, depreciation, deprivation, desperation, degradation, desecration, desegregation, delimitation, depredation, defenestration, and ultimately decrepitude, etc. You're not going to get away with anything in the end. The actuaries are after you!

What it comes down to is that I'm thinking of retiring. Might even try bungie-jumping with no bungies attached. That would be an experience to write home about:

*Dear Mom, Snuffed myself today.
Your former child and ex-adult,
Gabbie*



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Ham Radio: Morse Code – Still Relevant

by Bea Reddy

Morse code is called **CW** (Continuous Wave) by HAM radio operators. Samuel Morse was one of the inventors of code that uses dots and dashes (aka *dits* and *dahs*) to represent the alphabet (lower case only), numbers, and punctuation. A **dah** is three times longer than a **dit** (dah = 3dit), and a space is as long as a dit but nothing is transmitted. The most frequently used letters are designed to be shorter. For example, the letter e is a dit, and the letter t is a dah.

Over the more than 100 years of CW use, an extensive set of abbreviations were developed. Initially reporters used these abbreviations to make news stories cheaper to send. The first set of these abbreviations were called The Phillips Code. Many of the abbreviations used in cell phone text messages were originally part of these codes, such as *POTUS* for *President of the United States*.

CW is still widely used for many reasons. It is one of the most power efficient modes of transmission. Building transmitters and receivers for CW is easy and cheap. It is a common language among many operators, even if they do not speak English.

There are quite a few HAM radio frequencies that are reserved for the exclusive use of CW.

If you are interested in learning Morse code, go to www.arrl.org/learning-morse-code.

Here are some examples of Morse code in action:

Admiral Jeremiah Denton Blinks T-O-R-T-U-R-E using Morse Code as P.O.W. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rufnWLVQcKg>

Under Siege (4/9) Movie CLIP - Morse Code (1992) HD (Warning: foul language) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQC7OzU_d18

Hackers Spotted Using Morse Code in Phishing Attacks to Evade Detection <https://thehackernews.com/2021/08/hackers-spotted-using-morse-code-in.html>

73 (code for “best regards”)

Bugs Behaving Badly – Million Millipede March

by Josie

What goes Bump 999 . . . Bump 999 . . . Bump 999 . . .

If you guessed it is a millipede with a wooden leg, you're right.



Millipede means “a thousand feet” (**mille**/*thousand* **ped**/*foot.*), but the truth is that your average millipede only has 160 legs tucked under its body. The legs are arranged in 40 crunchy body segments with 4 legs on each segment. Millipedes are usually around an inch long, but they can be much larger.

Here is an exciting video about “**Holding the World's Biggest Millipede**” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKDKQbcuwq8>

They are so good for the outdoor environment--munching on dead vegetation and little bugs. They love moist environments. They don't bite, and they are not poisonous.

Unfortunately, millipedes love to migrate en masse in the spring and fall. If your house is in their path, they will be in your house, in your basement, in your garage, on your house, on your driveway, AND they will be present in amazing quantities. Also, they can climb. And they stink.

Even the most thorough entryway sealing usually does not succeed in keeping them out.

The good news is they they won't breed in your house.

If you touch a millipede, it will curl up. If you see a millipede that is curled up without touching it, it is dead.

What can you do about the invasion?

- Get rid of dead vegetation anywhere around your house
- Spray your entryways with diluted tea tree oil or peppermint oil.
- Vacuum and sweep often
- Step on them (they crunch)
- Put down some glue traps by your doors (not the best way because you might also catch your feet, your shoes, your children, and your pets)
- You can spray or put down poison, but it is usually not effective in getting rid of them.

Why do they stink?

Because Milly Peed.

Bears and Yellow Jackets

by Wayne Stanko

I found the article on yellow jackets in the August *BROADCAST* to be very timely. I had several yellow jacket nests in my front lawn. One morning a very large bear dug up one of the nests. My neighbor chased him off before he could finish. He returned the next morning to finish the job.

The next week a mother and two cubs visited at 5 p.m. She ran the cubs up a very large hemlock tree. She then started to dig up a yellow jacket nest near the tree. I made some noise to scare them off, but it didn't work. The cubs just went higher in the tree.

The mother started acting strangely. She left the cubs in the tree and went to the other side of the lawn. She just sat there, then she suddenly collapsed face first to the ground. She laid there for about a minute then got up and walked very slowly back to the tree with the cubs. She climbed the tree to join the cubs. They finally left sometime after 7:30.

I think I know what caused the mother to behave so strangely. That morning, Terminix had treated all the nests in my lawn with an insecticide. When the mother dug up the nest, she must have temporarily reacted to the insecticide.

Smart Alec

with
Sirius & Zany

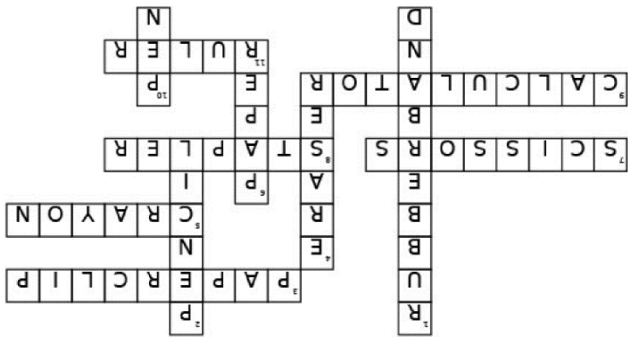


HEY SIRIUS,
REMEMBER LAST YEAR WHEN WE WENT
CAMPING AND YOU WERE FRIGHTENED
BY THE NOISE OF AN OWL?

I WAS SO SCARED,
I LOST CONTROL OF
BODILY FUNCTIONS!

YEAH, HA, HA!
THAT WAS A HOOT.

BettyHass 2021



Executive Committee Report

ExComm members and advisors (*Sharron Armel, Johanna Dokter, Grace Lehto, Will McGuffin, and Wayne Stanko*) met on August 2 at the Sierra Nevada Taproom in Mills River.

The group discussed how to handle requests from prospective members. Our actions may include providing information specific to our group and its activities, giving an overview of resources available at the national level, and describing the process for joining and referring the interested person to the American Mensa website's membership testing page. Wayne Stanko will follow-up with the most recent inquiry.

The last few details were worked out for the upcoming 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 June 30, 2021		\$ 5,592.36
Receipts:		
June subsidy from Am. Mensa	\$ 105.40	
Total Receipts		\$ 105.40
Disbursements:		
None	\$ -	
Total Disbursements	\$ -	\$ -
Closing Balance at July 31, 2021		\$ 5,697.76

Submitted by *Wayne Stanko*, Treasurer

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Deputy Local Secretary

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Member-at-Large

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