

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

BROADCAST

Vol. 27, No. 12, December 2021
<http://frenchbroad.us.mensa.org>



Winter Crow

Photo taken by Will McGuffin in North Asheville

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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.

***FBM Events Calendar
December 2021***

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

at Longhorn Steakhouse, 3 Restaurant Ct. (off Tunnel Rd in Asheville)
If you plan to attend, contact Fae Armstrong
one4fae2@yahoo.com or 828-575-0121

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

at The Village Porch, 51 North Merrimon (in Reynolds Village)
RSVP by Dec. 5 to SharronArmel@gmail.com

Saturday, December 11, 5:30pm: Holiday Party

at the home of Grace Lehto, 25 Hopedale Circle in West Asheville
RSVP by Dec. 8 to GraceLehto@yahoo.com
See Local Secretary's Report (page 6) for more details.



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.

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

**Until further notice, in-person events are
open to fully-vaccinated members & guests only.**

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

Regional Vice Chairman's Message



Happy Holidays to all! Whether you celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, or some other Winter Holiday, hope you have a happy one!

I've just returned from the quarterly AMC meeting, right here in Charlotte, NC. First of all, let me address those pesky yellow postcards that have been arriving for the Mensa Oral History Project. The latest yellow postcards that I have received are light-years better than the first one, which was written by

the vendor. Believe me, the Board is working hard to forestall anything like the first postcard ever happening again. More on that in a minute...

From a strictly marketing aspect, this campaign has been a smashing success. Here, in the words of Trevor Mitchell, our Executive Director, are the numbers:

Total stories collected - 7,809 (Our project seems to be performing better than many of the others the vendor has done in terms of responses).

Data Verification:

Emails - 7,852 verified and 1,429 new/updated

Addresses - 8,729 verified and 597 new/updated

Home Phone - 2,372 verified and 6,911 new/updated

Cell Phone - 5,059 added (granted some may use cell phone as home phone)

95% of those participating and completing the survey at the end of the call would recommend it to others.

We've had 164 former members rejoin to participate in the project.

In my opinion, that last piece of information, that we have had 164 former members pay to rejoin, makes this project a huge success; and coupled with the fact that 7,809 Mensans wanted their stories to be recorded, even if they did not buy the final book, is noteworthy. Finally, the response rate, near 20%, is remarkable in advertising.

Now, I do “get it” – many members did not like feeling “blindsided” by the project, but I have to remind you that it was advertised in the Mensa Leader, Mensa Wired (which goes to everybody – at least those who have the button for inhouse communication set to “on”), and the Mensa Bulletin. And that first postcard really looked like spam!

The AMC had three motions this last meeting to address those problems. If you were watching live, you know that we tabled those motions until the very next meeting, for a very good reason: in discussing them, we discovered that projects submitted to the Research Review Committee, and Mensa Foundation business, would have been hampered by the motions as written. But we are committed to wordsmithing them by the next meeting.

Piedmont Area Mensa will hold their fabulous Regional Gathering, “It’s an AARRRRRG!!” from March 25-27, 2022 in Greenville, SC at the Drury Inn and Suites. You can contact the registrar at rgchair@piedmontareamensa.org

Register now!

Nancy Campbell, RVC5

704-533-3351 or RVC5mail@gmail.com

Local Secretary's Message



BRRR! Getting ready for winter always comes as a surprise to me – or at least how soon I have to face it! FBM has ventured into indoor gatherings, at venues with high safety standards and plenty of “social-distancing” space. We enjoyed Pack’s Tavern in October, The Village Porch, the Urban Cider Company, and the Iconic Kitchen in November. I hope you’ll see something on the schedule that you’d like to attend!

And if you can suggest locations we might try, please let me know.

In particular, please take note of the almost-annual Holiday Party to be held Saturday, December 11 at the home of Grace Lehto, 25 Hopedale Circle in West Asheville. This gathering is open to members and guests who are fully vaccinated.

Dinner will consist of meat lasagna, spaghetti with vegetarian meatballs, bread, salad, and dessert. Please bring your own beverages.

As is our custom, we will have a Mystery Gift Exchange. If you choose to participate, please bring a wrapped gift valued at \$15 or more (and please don’t even think about gag gifts!) After dinner, Grace will work her magic with numbers and letters (and maybe even rubber duckies), and fun will follow!

RSVP to GraceLehto@yahoo.com by December 8. Please indicate whether you choose the meat or meatless main course.

Happy Trails to members who have moved out of our area:

Roy Green

Frances Caldwell-Krause

Happy December birthdays to:

John Fishwick

James Lesko

Tommy Hooker

Kristen Olberz

Stephen Irish

Douglas Prater

Happy Mensa Anniversaries to:

Anne Desotelle

Kirsten Olberz

Carlos Holsonback

Diego Rivera

Tommy Hooker

Wayne Stanko

Stephen Irish

Kirk Wooten

David Kulick

If your name is missing from any of the applicable “celebration” lists, please check your profile at AmericanMensa.org, to make sure you’re allowing display of your birthday, etc.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary

SharronArmel@gmail.com



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Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



Gabbie's Once-in-a-Lifetime Assessment of Humanity and Its Alleged Civilization:

Well, as usual, no one has dared to write me a note to applaud, complain or comment about my most recent diatribe, so it looks like I'm on my own once again. Since no courageous soul came forth with any suggestion, I struggled to find a topic for this month. What I came up with was my embarrassment at being associated with you so-called higher primates. Opposing thumbs, my foot! Opposing opinions is more like it. (Ever notice that if you guys can't find something to argue about, you'll just make something up?)

Speaking of opinions, I'd like to opine on some of our greatest examples, to show what might be accomplished if people were to put their minds to it. I've noticed that there are some folks who actually think, people like... well, here's a short list:

Jane Goodall – Who went to Africa as a secretary to Dr. Leakey and ended up befriending another species which isn't so different from us (98.4% the same DNA). She studied bonobos too, but National Geographic would have refused to publish the photos of their incessant flirtations, so she stuck with chimps. (Anyone remember J. Fred Muggs?)

Gabbie goes on...

Albert Einstein – The patent clerk who was somehow able to figure out some of the basic Laws Of The Universe, and who was never tricked into admitting his belief or lack of belief in a Supreme Being. They sliced his brain up when he died to see how it worked. It looked like everyone else's.

George Washington Carver – An agricultural scientist who was born a slave and died at 78 after earning high degrees, teaching and researching for years, and testifying before Congress. He did not invent peanut butter.

Ötzi the Iceman – The 5,000 year old natural mummy who'd been hunting and hunted two miles high in the Alps. He's now housed in the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bolzano, Italy, where he is regularly photographed, x-rayed, and viewed by 300,000 modern humans annually. (I wonder how much they charge for a viewing.)

Timothy Leary – Not an iceman, but a visionary in a world of reactionaries who once said to me, "Don't follow leaders." I'm sure he knew that before starting his LSD explorations. By the way, LSD is still illegal in the good ol' USA as of this writing.

Well, well, I've just taught myself a lesson. It seems that not all humans are functionally insane and terminally destructive. There are some who enhance the world in spite of their brethren's (and sistern's) rejection of them and their ideas. There are some who have good in their hearts and manage to rise above the herd mentality and accomplish things that benefit humanity and don't involve explosives (Alfred Nobel notwithstanding). (I'd better get off this kick before it affects my long held and generally sour attitude.)

But there are still many running around loose and unsupervised with their heads up their (expletive deleted), doing what they can to bring others to their unique point of view or kill them. What's wrong with that picture?

Gabbie goes on and on...

There's one saving grace anyway. At least we're all mortal and this poor joke will simply stop at some undetermined point, whether by Semi-intelligent Design, in a fatal technological event (drunk driving an airplane for example), or some frailty built into the human manifestation (read: war, cancer, terminal embarrassment).

Your inveterate observer of our benighted species,

Gabbie

bulC kooB

by *Sharron Armel*

A backward book club? Whazzat? You suggest a book, and anyone who's interested in discussing it via Zoom will respond. So far, we have open invitations to share thoughts about:

Caste: the Origins of our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson?

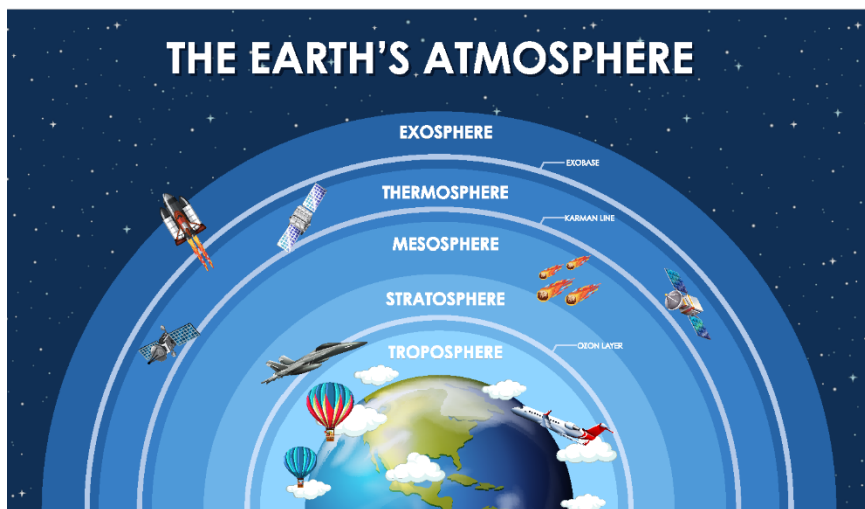
The author has received a Pulitzer Prize in Journalism, and both *Caste* and her first book, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, have hit the top of most major lists. It's a timely and thought-provoking non-fiction book.

Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens

This 2018 novel has spent more than 124 weeks on bestselling fiction lists; it has won the Booksellers Award in Japan and the British "Page Turner" Book of the Year Award.

Email SharronArmel@gmail.com

HAM Radio - Radio Wave Propagation ***- by Bea Reddy***



One of the most interesting aspects of HAM radio is how to send radio waves from Point A to Point B.

Directing the waves is conceptually similar to playing pool. You might have a straight shot, but quite often you have to bounce off other objects to get where you want to go. Bounced signals can travel further, sometimes much further, than the direct signals. There have been times that a single signal has been able to travel almost 1,900 miles.

During the day, the sun excites the ions in the lower layers of the atmosphere. The highest activity is around noon. This ion activity affects how radio waves are transmitted.

The higher frequencies (shorter wavelengths) work better during daylight (10-30 MHz), and the lower frequencies work better at night (2-10 MHz). That is one of the things that you study when you learn about HAM radio.

In addition to bouncing off the ionosphere, you can also use certain satellites that are authorized for HAM use. When you can see it, you can bounce signals off of the moon. Believe it or not, you can even use meteors!!!

In addition to line of sight and skywave propagation, you can also use the internet. There is a whole section of HAM radio that uses radio programs and software defined radios (SDRs).

Bugs Behaving Badly – The Spotted Lanternfly
- by *Josie*



This beautiful insect is really a little sap-sucking, crop destroying invasive species. If you guessed that it came from the Orient, you are correct. It is native to China, India, and Vietnam.

Way back in 2014, it was discovered in

Pennsylvania. Since that time, it has been working its way to North Carolina.

It is already established in 9 other states, and dead adults have recently been found in our state.

These little bugs LOVE the fruit of the vine and the tree of heaven (another invader). There have been documented cases where they have destroyed up to 90% of infested vineyards. They also attack hops, fruit trees, many ornamental plants, and can cause great distress to trees. Too bad they don't attack stink bugs.

After they suck on stuff, they ooze a substance called honeydew which provides a breeding ground for sooty mold.

The spotted lanternfly and other invasive species are often found in and around firewood, so it is a good practice to only get firewood near your home.

One female lanternfly can lay 30-50 eggs in masses that are 1-1½ inches long. The eggs look like mud when they harden. They are usually found from the middle of October until spring.

When they hatch, they are black with white spots. As they grow, they get red patches. They eventually mature into what you see in the photo above.

If you see one, kill it. Also, if possible take a picture and email the picture and location information to badbug@ncagr.gov.

For more information, <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>



Executive Committee Report

The Executive Committee met Monday, November 1, at The Village Porch in North Asheville. Present were Sharron Armel, Grace Lehto, and Wayne Stanko. We enjoyed the meal and venue so much that we're going to hold the December ExComm meeting in the same place!

In place of a December Thu.D! gathering, we decided to schedule a Holiday Party on Saturday, December 11, at Grace Lehto's home. More details can be found in the in the Local Secretary's message on page 6.

We discussed the possibility of including member ads in our newsletter and/or on our website. Sharron reported that RVC Nancy Cambell supports the idea, as numerous other groups do include advertising. Sharron also noted that Webmaster Lizz Russell says we'll be able to add this to our website. The opportunity to place such an ad is considered a benefit of participation in FBM, and no fees will be charged. Further, these "Member-to-Member Services" ads will be limited to services or products our members produce and want to offer to fellow Mensans. Clearly this is a project that will require some planning and coordination, so watch future *BROADCASTS* for more information on the process.

Submitted by ***Grace Lehto***, Deputy Local Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Closing Balance at September 30, 2021			\$ 5,422.57
Receipts:			
Monthly subsidy from Am. Mensa	\$	110.80	
Total Receipts			\$ 110.80
Disbursements:			
None	\$	-	
Total Disbursements	\$	-	\$ -
Closing Balance at October 31, 2021			\$ 5,533.37

Submitted by ***Wayne Stanko***, Treasurer

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Deputy Local Secretary

Grace Lehto gracelehto@yahoo.com

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