THE FRENCH BROAD MENSA NEWSLETTER

BROADCAST

Vol. 28, No. 4, April 2022

BREAKING NEWS! Hot! Hot! Hot! APRIL FOOLS' DAY CANCELED!

Declared redundant by panel of government experts. Can't compete with real fake news.



Professor Irwin Corev agrees.



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Special Thanks to our Feature Writers

who have submitted special April Fools' stories. Their names are withheld to protect their dignity.

And to Cover Artist Michael Havelin

Submissions to the Broadcast

Deadline for articles, letters, and comments 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 April 2022

Friday, April 1, 11:30am: First Friday Lunch

at Chili's, 253 Tunnel Road in Asheville If you plan to attend, please contact Fae Armstrong: <u>one4fae2@yahoo.com</u> or 828-575-0121

Monday, April 4, 11:30am: Executive Committee Meeting

at Asiana Grand Buffet, 1968 Hendersonville Road in South Asheville https://asianagb.com/ RSVP by April 2 to <u>SharronArmel@gmail.com</u>

Saturday, April 23, 11:00am: Special Saturday Gathering

Riverside cleanup, Amboy Road in Asheville See article on page 7 for more information. RSVP by April 20 to wstanko@charter.net

Thursday, April 28, 6:00pm: Thu.D!

at Rye Knot, 868 Merrimon in North Asheville <u>https://ryeknotco.com/</u> RSVP by **April 21** to <u>SharronArmel@gmail.com</u> (This popular restaurant recommends early reservations!)

RSVPs are important for table planning, and many public eateries are still operating at limited 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



Culture Quest registration is officially open now, and runs until March 31. This year CultureQuest® will be held on Sunday, April 24. Each CultureQuest® team may have up to five members and two alternates, but are not required to have that many. (There have actually been a couple of years when a "team" consisting of one person was entered, so if you are good at trivia, ask your group to sponsor you.) All team members must be American Mensa members and must have

renewed their membership before March 31, or their team will be disqualified. A local group may have more than one team if they wish. The top 20 teams are recognized on the Awards page on the national website, as well as sharing in monetary awards for their Local Group. More information can be found at

https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/culturequest.

April 18 – 24 is National Volunteer Week, and so most Mensa Cares community service projects are planned for April. The Community Service Committee recognizes service contributed towards the local community or society. You can submit a Recognition request by providing the name and date of the event, the number of member and family participants, the percent of group participation, the total of contributions (either in time or value), and a brief essay on the positive effect or result for the community. The Local Secretary will be asked to confirm the submission by a local group member, but need not be the one to submit it. If you have a community service project that you would like to run, you can register it at

https://www.us.mensa.org/volunteer/communityservice/.

Nominations for National Ombudsperson close on March 31. Per our Bylaws, the National Ombudsperson is elected by the Local Group Ombudspersons every six years. Although a Local Group is permitted to have more than one Local Ombudsperson, each group gets only one vote. It's not too late to volunteer to be your group's Ombudsperson. Most likely, there will be no "action" in a given year, but you get to have your name on the group masthead.

Sadly, Piedmont Area Mensa has decided to cancel their RG for 2022. They put on a really good party, and I was looking forward to it. But the Omicron variant of COVID is still around wreaking its havoc, so I understand their caution.

The quarterly AMC meeting will be on March 19, 2022 in Hurst, TX. Hurst, TX (in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area) is the location of the National Office, so we get to meet with many of the staff members, and ask the burning questions that have been on our minds. There is still time to tell me about your concerns, if you have any, but it is too late for a motion to go on the agenda. Of course, I can always put a motion on the agenda for the next AMC meeting, which will be at the Annual Gathering in Sparks, NV (think Reno, NV.) That will take place on July 7th. If you want information about the Annual Gathering (AG) or the Colloquium, you can find it at <u>https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/ags/</u>

Till next month,

Nancy Campbell, RVC5 704-533-3351 or <u>RVC5mail@gmail.com</u>



Local Secretary's Message

Coming soon–a new feature column will appear in our newsletter next month. Watch for it! And then send in your questions.

By mid-March, French Broad Mensa had 129 members in our 17-county area. Almost half of us receive the *BROADCAST* electronically. With the electronic version, you get the newsletter earlier, you can zoom the photos and text to a larger size,



the web links can help you find more information about topics discussed, and you might even help save a tree. You can make the switch by accessing your member profile on the American Mensa website.

Happy April Birthdays to: Walter Busby David Carmody

Karen Caskey Robert Seay

Happy Mensa Anniversaries to: Rachel Austin David Carmody Johanna Dokterr Brian Johnson Grace Lehto

Will McGuffin Eleanor Ninestein Susan Read Kerry Shannon

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 information.

Sharron Armel, Local Secretary <u>SharronArmel@gmail.com</u>

MERF Scholarship Program



We received 42 applications for the Mensa Education and Research Foundation Scholarship Program this year. The applications are based on essays about the applicants' educational and vocational goals and what steps they are taking to achieve their goals. Two of the applications were disqualified for including their names on the essays. Eleven of the applications were forwarded for regional consideration. There will be at least one local scholarship of \$600 awarded. Thanks to Grace Lehto, Sharron Armel, and Will McGuffin for volunteering to judge the essays.

Submitted by Wayne Stanko

Community Service

For several years, French Broad Mensa has been doing a clean-up of the Amboy Road River Park in Asheville. The park lies on the bank of the French Broad River. Our group is named after the river. We do clean-ups three times per year: Spring, Summer, and Fall. The service was interrupted the last two years due to the COVID virus. We plan to resume in April this year. The clean-up is done in conjunction with an organization called Riverlink. They are dedicated to the preservation of the river and to the development of recreational uses of the river. Riverlink provides bags, gloves, pickers, and safety vests for the cleanup crew. Eight Mensa volunteers comprise the clean-up crew. After the clean-up, the volunteers go to lunch paid for by our local group.

Submitted by Wayne Stanko

Mediocre-Okay Advice from Gabbie

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



Dearest Gabbie,

I've played practical jokes on April Fools' Day most of my life, but no one ever explained the reason for the day to me. Where did April Fools' Day come from and why isn't it a national holiday (meaning a day off with pay)?

Sincerely (sic), Patriotic American

Dear Pat,

Are you kidding me? Come on! Seriously, get it together.

You mean you don't get lied to, cheated, robbed, bumfuzzled enough the other 364 days of the year to satisfy yourself? Think about it and try to be honest. Let's take a quick look at some of the foolers.

Politicians – These guys are the glib talkers, the ones who refuse to give yes/no answers, the ones who get specialized training in how to deflect questions by "answering" questions that were never even asked, the ones who will promise anything to anyone any time and anywhere to win a vote so they can keep their jobs. Someone once said that an honest politician is one who stays bribed. Hmmm...

Advertisers – "Puffing" is okay, right? Just stretch the truth a little bit to make the product or service sound interesting enough to set

that barbed hook securely in your jaw so they can reel you and your wallet in for harvesting. And they're not only after your hardearned cash either. They might want you to believe their lies for some nefarious reason cooked up in a corporate boardroom. They've studied psychology and know what our buttons are and how to push them.

Lawyers - Commonly known as a "mouthpiece" or "hired gun." Pay them enough and they might even help you out of a sticky situation caused by someone else's lie, or maybe even your own. "Legal ethics" (a self-contradictory concept if there ever was one) requires them to work to their client's best advantage. Innocence? Guilt? Doesn't matter. In fact, many shysters don't want to know about the client's "truth." Remember the "Twinky Defense?" And how about Rudy?

Corporations – I'm not saying that ALL corporations are bad, but when cash flow is more important than the Human Race, there's a problem. Capitalism is a greed-based system; more for me, who cares about you? Think Big Pharma, Big Oil, Big Insurance, Government agencies... there are plenty of perps around. You just have to learn to spot them. And remember that "the corporation decided (or did)" is a bogus argument. Corporations are "legal fictions." Somewhere along the line an actual human made a decision. Hold them personally responsible.

Used Car Salesmen – These jokers are legendary. Why are there so many bad jokes about them? They've earned it. "This beauty was only driven to and from the market by a 75-year old widow. It's in perfect showroom condition, and here are the falsified maintenance records to prove it." Keep your hand on your wallet.

Just kidding, of course, Gabbie

Dear Gabbie,

What's this "Don't Say Gay" law I heard they now have in Florida? How come they get to have one and the rest of us don't? Wot's up wiv dat, yo?

Perplexed

Dear 'Plexed,

This is old news by now, but I'll take a shot at it. Once in a while it's worth the effort to examine the thinking behind a statute. This one doesn't need much analysis, just like there wasn't much thinking on the front end either. Let's at least be consistent, yes?

The Great State of Florida is working to pass an "education" law to restrain teachers from talking about gender, gender choice (read gender choice like the alphabet people: LGPTQ, etc), and other topics related to sex education. This flies in the face of reality though, donchuthink? Sex is built into our biology. In fact, sex is the basic building block of the human race, as well as all other species. To my my pitiful Mensa mind, we need to be as informed as possible on this baseline topic. It's the one human activity we're all qualified to participate in from puberty onward: procreation. It takes no education, no training, no involved thinking. But it's always a good idea to know what you're involved in doing.

I hear you, Florida, I hear you loud and clear. What this proposed state law is actually saying is "I'm going to close my eyes now so you won't be able to see me any longer." Inside-out thinking like that should be easy enough to spot by even the dullest of dullards, but I'm obviously wrong about that, ain't I?

So don't worry, Plexed. If Florida can do it, any state can. You might get your shot at it, too. Don't worry about a thing. Someday this will all be over... I hope.

Multiplexed, Gabbie

Dear Gabbie,

Is that crazy Russian Putin really going to start a nuclear war? That'll solve the Ukrainian problem, won't it?

Peace Monger

Dear Monger,

Suppose, just suppose, that Putin learned that he has a terminal disease. If that were true, he wouldn't have to worry about the future, would he? He would be free to be the idiot he's proving himself to be without caring about the damage he would be free to do. Of course, we don't have access to his medical records, and certainly not to his mental health records. The guy is an enigma at the moment, but an enigma with his hand hovering over the nuclear buttons. In any event, there's a nut at the wheel and it looks like we're headed downhill on an icy road in a blinding snowstorm.

Is there anything else you're curious about?

Your reassuring pal, Gabbie



April Fools' Day Pranks In modern times, people lengths to create elabora hoaxes. Newspapers, rad



In modern times, people have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations and websites have participated in the April 1 tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims that have fooled their audiences.

In 1957, the BBC reported that Swiss farmers were experiencing a record spaghetti crop and

showed footage of people harvesting noodles from trees. In 1985, Sports Illustrated writer George Plimpton tricked many readers when he ran a made-up article about a rookie pitcher named Sidd Finch who could throw a fastball over 168 miles per hour.

In 1992, National Public Radio ran a spot with former President Richard Nixon saying he was running for president again... only it was an actor, not Nixon, and the segment was all an April Fools' Day prank that caught the country by surprise.

In 1996, Taco Bell, the fast-food restaurant chain, duped people when it announced it had agreed to purchase Philadelphia's Liberty Bell and intended to rename it the Taco Liberty Bell. In 1998, after Burger King advertised a "Left-Handed Whopper," scores of clueless customers requested the fake sandwich. Google notoriously hosts an annual April Fools' Day prank that has included everything from "telepathic search" to the ability to play Pac Man on Google Maps.

For the average trickster, there is always the classic April Fools' Day prank of covering the toilet with plastic wrap or switching out sugar and salt.

Submitted by Michael Havelin

Powerdoozle Moves to Asheville

Dateline: April 1, Asheville

Throckmorton Gorfnee, well known inventor of the Powerdoozle, announced in a lengthy and rather verbose press release last week that he would be moving his entire laboratory and production operation to the mountains of Western North Carolina, specifically to the quiet, isolated village of Asheville. A lifelong resident of Dried Bones, Arizona, Gorfnee made his unexpected announcement and blamed the mobs of "coy-dogs" for his move, stating they were eating too many of his chickens and keeping him awake at night, his most creative time of day, with their howling at the moon. In addition, said the leading scientist, he wanted to use the unbridled strength of the mighty French Broad River as a free power source for his endeavors.

Buncombe County Commissioners said they were pleased that Gorfnee had chosen Asheville from amongst the myriad other riverbed towns vying for Gornfee and would begin working on a permitting and river use licensing fee structure immediately.

The Bluebird and Chickadee Standoff

Dateline: April 1, Weaverville

Every year the bluebirds and chickadees fight over who is going to get the birdhouse in which to build their nest and raise their young. And nearly every year the bluebirds win (yay).

This one year however, with neither of the birds backing off, a crow appears and lands on a tree branch overlooking the birdhouse. Suddenly both the blue bird and the chickadee fly off together in the same direction. The crow remains on the tree branch overlooking the birdhouse for several minutes. Then one of the birds returns to the house and the crow flies off. It seems like the bluebird and the chickadee went to some sort of bird council to arbitrate which one gets the house. It was so long ago that I don't remember which bird won.

Second Aroostook War Narrowly Averted

Dateline: April 1, Augusta

The citizens of the State of Maine have voted to cede the northern part of their state to Canada. The new border will go into effect one year from today—April 1, 2023.

The causes of this unusual decision began nearly 200 years ago, with the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842, in which the USA and the UK agreed to divvy up a contested area of Maine.

America's Secretary of State Daniel Webster served as negotiator and co-author. Not commonly known, he was also a prolific inventor, and had developed a special "Peace Forevermore" ink to be used for the treaty. Unfortunately, the ink not only disappeared but also caused the paper to disintegrate. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty is no more! To avoid reopening the Aroostook War, the State of Maine has voted to cede the long-disputed territory to Canada.

US officials, resigned to the loss of 7,015 square miles, are mostly mum. Senator Munchkin commented "That land has no coal mines, what use is it anyway?" and a Freedom Conkus spokesperson added "Mostly Democrats — good riddance!"

Florida is said to be exploring the option of giving Miami and the Keys to Cuba.

Mensa-derived statistics prove beyond doubt that 73% of Mensans believe that 67% of quoted statistics are true and made up by the promulgator on the spot.

This is a proven fact [all the time, most of the time, some of the time, none of the time] {choose one}.

RACT-F

Sharks Sighted in French Broad

Dateline: April 1, Asheville

Beer swillers on the rear deck of the New Belgian Brewery in Asheville were treated to the sight of two spotted hammertoe sharks swimming in the French Broad River last Wednesday. West Asheville resident Alonzo Blather, a frequent visitor on the deck (known as a "deckadent") was cited as saying, "Twern't no beerish hlu'snashun not neither. I was on'y on my third beer. And they wasn't no high grav'ty not neither!"

Flora, Blather's daughter, echoed her dad's sighting, "I done seen 'em, too."

"Me, too, " further echoed Flora's younger colorful twin sister Fauna."I reco'nized 'em from a book pitcher I seen once't. It were in a book."

River Patrol Officer Xavier Zott, sited further along the river, sighted and attempted to cite the sharks for unauthorized swimming and picnicking without a permit, but sighed, "They was simply too far out. I couldn't reach 'em. Then they was gone out of sight."

Anyone spotting those sharks or any others should contact River Patrol headquarters ASAP and make a report. Include date, time, specific location, weather conditions, and any other pertinent sighting datums.



The Flying Crocodile

Dateline: April 1, Asheville

If only Kevin had listened to his mother. She'd told him to chew his food. But he'd had to go and swallow that young boy whole, iPod and all. He remembered even being sassy about it at first. But then, he started feeling a little different. Something was happening.

See, crocodiles have a digestive system that can dissolve bones, hooves and horns. In addition, they can grow as many as fifty-five complete sets of teeth in their lifetine and chew up most anything, if they've a mind to, that is. But, he'd been showing off and swallowed the boy whole. He

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digested him, clothes and all, not a problem. But the iPod was a whole other thing.

It felt like a lump in his belly. He'd be sitting on a log, sunning himself, and then, out of nowhere, he'd hear music. Snippets at first, a second or so. As the weeks followed, the snippets became more frequent, and lasted longer. Finally, his mother threw him out. Seems the music that was coming out of whatever Kevin had swallowed was getting louder, more frequent and lasting longer. It was scaring away possible meals and it would soon be a matter of survival. She had other children to consider, after all. Somehow that iPod was charging its battery from Kevin's digestive juices.

Kevin went deeper into the swamp hoping for some solution to his dilemma. He'd tried laxatives, enemas, and prune juice. The iPod just wouldn't pass. Here he was months later and still that awful lump in his belly. It seemed even to be spreading. In fact, it was. It had begun weaving itself into Kevin's nerves and sinews, insinuating itself into his DNA. It had reached back into the primordial ooze of his genetic code to a time when birds were flying lizards. As Kevin slept, it began.

When Kevin first noticed the lumps on his back, he thought perhaps he'd injured himself thrashing around in his sleep. But they grew. Within a month, they were no longer lumps but some kind of folded appendage. They had feeling, sensation in them. He felt somehow that he wanted to spread them. He gave it a try. At first, it was frightening. They were huge. Kinda thin, but huge. He wiggled them up and down. Then he flapped them in unison. His body lifted from the ground.

What was this? What sort of wonder? Could he perhaps use these wings to make it possible to catch a meal? It had been days since he'd had a good meal, what with the noise and all. He tried it again. Yes, it could work, but he'd have to practice. You know this flying stuff isn't just having a pair of wings. It takes some skill as well.

This whole wing thing gave Kevin new hope. So, he practiced. Every day his wings got stronger and his skill greater. Within a week or so, he had gotten good enough to skim over the watery surface of the swamp and grab a fish, or a fisherman on the fly. He was enjoying it. The swooping and the diving. The feel of the air against his face. It was without doubt the happiest he had ever been.

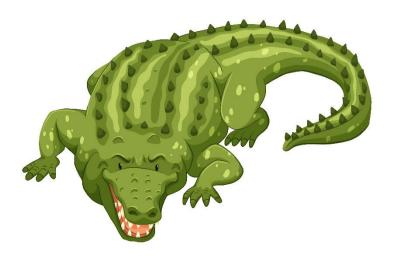
But it was not to last. He had not always been successful in his attempts to procure a real man meal. And he'd been caught on camera by a couple of missed meals. The local paper took up the story about this loud, flying crocodile boom box that was a danger to the community. What if it started flying over schools and churches? A search team was sent out and had no problem finding him. The music and all. But he always just flew away. But their luck held and from a helicopter he was spotted taking a nap on a log. The rest is history.

Kevin didn't live long after that. Seems the iPod had set up some kinda short circuit in the crocodile's body and he died of electrocution.

His body finally wound up on display in the Ripley's Believe it or Not Museum in Gatlinburg, Tennessee in a glass case. You can press a button and listen to his story which is indeed quite amazing. People have been heard murmuring in awe and saying "now that's a crock."

And the moral of the story is "Be careful what you swallow whole."





The Thing

Dateline: April 1, Weaverville

Crazy is as crazy does. You've all heard people say, "This is crazy. You can't make this stuff up." Well, maybe this is true and maybe it isn't. You be the judge.

One mild spring evening while walking along a country road I heard an unknown sound in the bushes. I stopped. Should I investigate? What if some animal leaps out and bites me? Suddenly I heard a call in the distance. Animal or woman? I wasn't sure. (I'm still not sure.) But whatever was in the bushes scurried toward that sound. I could see the bushes move as the stalks were crushed by the Thing hurrying towards that call.

That night I had a lucid dream, in which I realize I'm dreaming. It doesn't happen as often now as it did back then. Sometimes when I'm dreaming my feet rise a few inches above the ground. I'm not walking, I'm gliding. In one dream I thought I was actually awake and was elated I had finally learned to glide in my 3D life. Nope, I was still dreaming. But I digress. Back to the mystery Thing. In the lucid dream I hear the same call again. Since I realized I'm 'only' dreaming, I call back. All nature sounds cease, like when a cougar is nearby. My wolf protector is by my side. I very slowly start gliding toward the advancing sound. It calls me. And I remember no more of the dream.

The next morning I decided that since it was now daylight (rather than twilight headed towards nightfall) I would revisit the place where I encountered the Thing. I pushed brush aside, looking for footprints, tracks, scat, fur – anything I could find to prove something was there. But nothing, except for the path of still crushed stems and leaves of the bushes. I mean that's proof that something was there, right? Everything else seemed normal, another sunny day in the south.

I tried to envision what this Thing would look like, based on the pattern of the path it made as it scampered off last evening. In my mind I was seeing a smallish animal, low to the ground, very broad and plumpish with fur all over it's body. I stayed there for a minute, and then I heard it. That seductive call, now far, far away.





Dateline April 1, West Henrietta

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend."

The three tall black walnut trees had stood guard on the property line for nearly a century. The local homeowner reports that a dray of squirrels inhabit the westernmost tree, while a band of blue jays claim the tree on the east. The tree in the middle — their battleground. Squirrels scoot around its branches and chatter angrily at the blue jays shrieking and threatening abuse. A never-ending dispute between the dray and the band. Never-ending, that is, until the day the bear decided to climb that middle tree. The squirrels didn't want him in territory they "owned," and the jays felt the same way about "their" tree. All the ire and pique they'd aimed at each other for decades was instantly turned on the bear. The blue jays dive-bombed his tender nose. The squirrels darted from branch to branch, vehemently cussing and occasionally dropping walnuts in his face. After a lifetime (or was it only a minute or two?) the bear's curiosity turned into confusion and then into abject terror. He scrambled down from the tree and made a beeline for the nearby woods. Looking back over his shoulder, he seemed to be wondering "What the dickens?"

"I saw it myself," said the homeowner, "and I'm still not sure I believe it!"



Bob & the Bobettes

Breaking News: The Bobettes have grown dramatically from about 4" last month to over 10" tall this month! Plantnanny *Grace Lehto* has named Bob's offspring Betty, Bruno, Barbara, and Brutus. Check back next month and prepare to be amazed!



Photograph by Michael Havelin

Executive Committee Report

The Executive Committee met Monday, March 7 at the new Happy Cinco de Mayo restaurant in east Asheville. Officers and advisors present were Sharron Armel, Johanna Dokter, Michael Havelin, Grace Lehto, Will McGuffin, and Wayne Stanko. Karen Youket attended as a visitor.

Local Scholarship Follow-up: Based on information and advice provided by our RVC Nancy Campbell, the group considered awarding a second scholarship in our region, to be funded by FBM treasury. It was moved and seconded to award a \$600 scholarship to the candidate whose essay scored the highest, after the winner(s) selected by American Mensa have been removed from consideration. The motion passed unanimously.

Testing and Proctor Issues: Karen shared what she has learned about the major changes American Mensa is making to the entry test process. To remain active, our proctors will have to comply with new rules by March 31. Otherwise, their proctor status will end. The group explored our options, considering the infrequent requests we've had for testing. It was moved and seconded to allow our active proctors to lapse, and to refer all inquiries for testing to the local testing center approved by American Mensa. The motion passed.

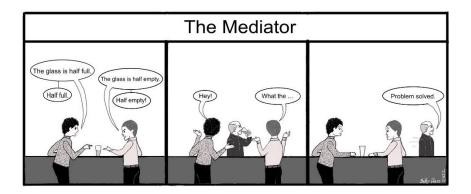
Member Recruitment: Johanna has volunteered to begin contacting people who have requested information on testing or document submission but have not joined Mensa. American Mensa gives us a monthly report of the inquiries they have received from our region; Sharron indicated there have been about 30 in the past year; she will make the latest report available to Johanna. The content of the contacts will include information about testing and document submission, examples of the activities the group offers, and getting a sense of the person's interest in pursuing membership.

Locations for April events were established:

Submitted by Grace Lehto, Deputy Local Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Closing Balance at January 31, 2022 \$5,674.23
Receipts: Monthly subsidy from Am. Mensa\$108.95 Total Receipts\$108.95
Disbursements: Newsletter editor dues\$79.00 Total Disbursements\$79.00
Closing Balance at February 28, 2022 \$5,704.18
Submitted by Wayne Stanko, Treasurer



French Broad Mensa Contacts

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BROADCAST

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