

The French Broad Mensa Newsletter

# ***BROADCAST***

Vol. 28, No. 6, June 2022

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



*What's happening this month?  
Lunches! Boat Ride! Dinner!  
Check the schedule on page 3.*

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***Special Thanks to our Printer,  
FBM member David Diehn of Clark Communications,  
who produces our print newsletter each month.***

***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**  
**June 2022**

**Friday, June 3, 11:30am: First Friday Lunch**

at Tupelo Honey Café, 1829 Hendersonville Rd. in South Asheville

<https://tupelohoneycafe.com/location/southside-asheville/>

If you plan to attend, please contact Fae Armstrong:

[one4fae2@yahoo.com](mailto:one4fae2@yahoo.com) or 828-575-0121

**Monday, June 6, 11:30am: Executive Committee Meeting**

at Crab du Jour, 115 Tunnel Road in Asheville

<https://crabdujourasheville.com/>

RSVP by June 5 to [SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com)

**Saturday, June 11, 11am: Second Saturday Gathering – Boat Tour**

at 2930 Memorial Highway, Lake Lure, NC

Members & guests pay \$8 at the dock, FBM covers the rest!

<https://www.lakeluretours.com/about-us.html>

Optional lunch at a nearby restaurant after the event

RSVP by June 3 to [SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com)

**Thursday, June 23, 6:00pm: Thu.D!**

at La Rumba Restaurant Latino, 105-C River Hills Rd, (formerly  
Bonefish Grill)

<https://www.larumbaasheville.com/>

RSVP by **June 20** to [SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com)

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***



Happy New Year! Mensa's fiscal year runs from April 1 to the following March 31st. If you haven't renewed by now, please do so immediately, before you get dropped from the national and local group rosters. The RVCs had to turn in their final reimbursement requests for the 2021-2022 Fiscal year this week. Besides my travel expenses, I purchased a number of those laminated yellow signs like my predecessor Baker Ring handed out, for those groups who have in-

person meetings and need to direct people to the proper table in a restaurant, etc. I also purchased a Zoom Professional license for Region 5. I'll be starting a monthly meeting for LocSecs and other local ExComm members soon.

One bright spot in this pandemic is the movement to Zoom meetings, many of which will continue after the pandemic is history. Finally, we have something to offer folks who live too far from the center of local group activity to attend things in person. Many groups have opened their Zoom meetings to any Mensa member who wants to join, not just their group members. One excellent example is Mid-America Mensa, whose member Theodore "Ted" Johnson, a Kansas professor, has started a series of Theodore Talks. Theodore Talks take place on Zoom the fourth Sunday of each month at 2:30 p.m. You must register for each lecture with an email address associated with your Zoom account. If you don't have one, you can sign up for a free Zoom account at <https://zoom.us/signup>.

A list of future Theodore Talks can be found on the Mensa National Events Calendar at <https://www.us.mensa.org/attend/calendar/>. Questions? Contact Brad Lucht at TheodoreTalks@MAMensa.org

Another possibility for remote Mensans is Plains & Peaks Mensa, in Colorado Springs, which has Sandy Halby coordinating game night through Zoom. While it's not an in-person event, it's still the creative

hilarity you've known in the past from Scattergories! You can find more information on <https://swellgarfo.com/scattergories/> Our own South Coast Mensa in Mobile, AL has a regular games night on Zoom, too. Look at their newsletter for Zoom information.

Finally, here are some fabulous upcoming in-person events:

1. COLLOQUIUM July 5th in Sparks NV - Giftedness Across the Lifespan: A More Complete Picture - brings together five subject-matter experts in the field of giftedness, each specializing in a development period from youth to elderhood.

(<https://www.mensafoundation.org/what-we-do/education-and-outreach/colloquium/>)

2. ANNUAL GATHERING July 6-10th in Sparks, NV – While I'm looking forward to the programming, gaming, and social events scheduled, I'm particularly looking forward to hearing our Gala speaker: Hidden Figures author Margot Lee Shetterly shines a dramatic light on four phenomenal women of color, "human computers" whose mathematical genius fueled NASA's rockets during the golden age of space travel.

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

**Nancy Campbell, RVC5**

704-533-3351 or [RVC5mail@gmail.com](mailto:RVC5mail@gmail.com)

### **Local Secretary's Message**

Spring Fever? I doubt it. Everyone I see seems ready to enjoy this warm, sunny weather -- cautiously optimistic!

By mid-May, French Broad Mensa had 115 members in our 17-county area, compared to 120 at about this time last year. This is usually our lowest count of the year, but we hope some "forgot to renew" members will return soon.



If you know anyone who might be interested in joining us, please let them know about the site in Asheville, which American Mensa has approved for Mensa Admission Testing. Contact Wayne Stanko, Testing Coordinator, for more information.

Welcome to members joining or rejoining our group:

*Tristan D'Ada*

*Tilden Singleton*

Happy June Birthdays to:

*Mark Gamble*

*Michael Havelin*

*Deborah Welt*

*Jack Wilkinson*

Happy Mensa Anniversaries to:

*Marci Bernstein*

*Mark Crossley*

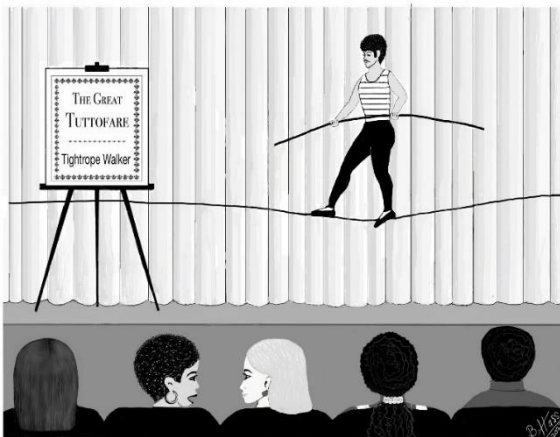
*Robert McCurdy*

*Trenton McDevitt*

If your name is missing from any of the applicable “celebration” lists, please check your profile at [AmericanMensa.org](http://AmericanMensa.org), to make sure you’re allowing display of your information.

*Sharron Armel*, Local Secretary

[SharronArmel@gmail.com](mailto:SharronArmel@gmail.com)



*“My husband said he’s a funambulist, but I’m pretty sure he’s Catholic.”*

## ***French Broad River Park Cleanup***



*Photograph by Michael Havelin*

Members pictured (Wayne Stanko, Will McGuffin, “Frankie” Franklin, and Sharron Armel), along with (not pictured) Michael Havelin, Grace Lehto, and Sandy Stoddard, cleaned up a section of the riverside park along Amboy Road. Riverlink provided us with safety vests, gloves, trash bags, and pick-up sticks.

This was the first part of our Saturday Special Event for April. We closed the adventure with lunch at the Westville Pub.

It's been more than two years since we performed this community service project, but we hope to return to our former schedule of several clean-ups each year.

## A Penny Saved

by *Michael Havelin*

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I loved my new home in the mountains of the east. Far different they were from the Rockies, in whose shadow I lived for many years. The Rockies were relatively young mountains, sharp in profile, grand in scope, and taller than any landscape I'd known before. But all things end sooner or later, and life plucked me from the West and dropped me in the Southeast, into the weather-worn Appalachians of Western North Carolina.

I'd made my move in the recommended good order. I sold my house for a nice profit, cut off my utilities, closed all my accounts, dropped a change-of-address at the post office, rented a truck which sorrowing friends helped me pack, and drove leisurely east across the empty plains, through the civilized Midwest heartland, and southeast to my new digs. I had driven east with cash in my pocket and a certified check for the house proceeds tucked into my left sock where I could test its presence at comforting intervals with my toes. My old life had closed and a new life beckoned.

After a year in Western North Carolina an envelope arrived unexpectedly one day from the Miners Bank of Idaho in my old home town of Pocatello. I slit the envelope and pulled out the single tri-folded sheet. It was a bank statement. It seemed that I still had an open account in Idaho, an account with a balance of one cent at the end of the statement period.

That was odd. Being of a methodical mind where money is concerned, I'd closed my account there and taken my money with me. But here was a bank statement for April through May of 2012, and it reported that I had a balance of one cent in my account. One cent!

55+ Checking					
04/02/2012	Beginning Balance				.01
		0 Deposits/Other Credits	+		.00
		0 Checks/Other Debits	-		.00
05/01/2012	Ending Balance	30 Days in Statement Period			.01
-----					
			Total For This Period	Total Year-to-Date	
-----					
	Total Overdraft Fees		\$ .00	\$ .00	
-----					
	Total Returned Item Fees		\$ .00	\$ .00	
-----					
----- Daily Ending Balance -----					
04/02	0.01				



I laughed and tossed the statement into my recycle bin.

The next month there was another statement. And the month after that, and the month after that.

I knew I'd been doing business with a thoroughly efficient modern bank, but perhaps I hadn't guessed exactly how efficient they were. They used computers, sent monthly computer-generated statements out to their depositors, and kept track of customers' funds in a most responsible way. I should have been reassured. But I was also perplexed.

It couldn't have been a joke. Banks don't joke. Why would they waste the computer time, paper, ink and postage to keep me informed of an account with a pitiful one cent balance? Perhaps they weren't merely efficient; perhaps they were insane.

After a year of this waste, I decided to put a stop to the statements. I mean, it didn't really bother me in any substantive way. But I was curious and offended by the idiocy of the situation. I picked up my phone and dialed.

"Hello, Miners Bank. How may I help you?"

"I moved from Idaho to North Carolina last year and I thought I had closed my accounts with you. Since moving, I've been receiving statements from you that report a balance of one cent."

"You'll have to talk with our Customer Service Desk for statement problems. I'll switch you over." Click. I had been switched.

"Customer Service. How can I help you?" It was a young man's voice.

I went through the whole thing again, explaining that I didn't see any sense in what they were doing and that I wanted to put a final closure on my relationship with them.

"Well," said the customer service rep thoughtfully, "We can handle this several ways. You could come into the nearest branch and withdraw the one cent and close the account that way."

"That won't do unless you have a branch in North Carolina near where I'm living now."

“All right. Well then, you could mail in a withdrawal slip with a letter of instruction and we could transfer the remaining balance to your current account, wherever that might be.”

“Couldn’t you just send me a check?”

“Oh, I’m so sorry. Bank policy doesn’t allow us to cut a check for less than a dollar.”

“How about you tape the penny to an index card and mail it to me?”

“I’m afraid that’s not how we do business.”

“Neither of those options would work anyway. I don’t have a withdrawal slip.”

“I could mail you a withdrawal slip. Would you like me to do that?”

“You mean to say that you would spend 46 cents postage plus the cost of an envelope and personnel work time to send me a withdrawal slip so I could get my one cent and close my account, but you wouldn’t send me actual penny?”

“That’s right,” he said reassuringly. “I’d also send you an account closure form for you to sign and return with the withdrawal slip. That would make it all official.” I could hear the pride in a job well done in the young man’s voice.

“This seems like a big waste of time all around, not to mention my cross-country phone call.”

“Oh, I hate to hear that. Hang up and I’ll call you right back.”

I did. He did. We were back at it again in less than a minute.

“Look,” I said. “Here’s the situation. You’re holding a penny of my money. It costs you money to monitor my account, to generate a monthly statement and mail it to me, and it must cost something for the armed guard who’s standing by watching my penny 24 hours a day. I’d like to help the bank save all those wasted funds. Is there any way I can abandon the penny? Maybe I can donate it to your office coffee fund.”

The young man’s tone turned serious. “I’d have to run that by our legal team. We’re not allowed to accept gratuities. Accounts are rarely abandoned voluntarily. There are undoubtedly some Federal or state regulations on that. I’ll bet there’s a form that you’d have to sign in front

of a notary in order to abandon an account without your being declared dead or M.I.A.”

“Can I donate the account to a local charity? Is there a Goodwill or Salvation Army in your neighborhood? Maybe some Hare Krishnas? I just want to close the account and stop receiving statements.”

And so it went. It’s now two years later. I’m still receiving monthly statements from Idaho. My balance is still only a single cent.

What I want to know now is why I’m not being paid interest on my balance. I might have to call a lawyer about this, maybe even report the problem to the FDIC or the Idaho Banking Commission. I’ll give it another six months for them to straighten it out first.

 or  -- ***You Decide!***

Grace and Sharron spot a large sign in a shopping center parking lot.

Grace: “Look at that! 10,000 square feet for sale. We should buy it!”

Sharron: “Well, we’d have to start a business to pay for it.”

Grace: “We could sell square shoes.”

Sharron: “Whaaat?”

Considering Grace’s occasional comment that she likes being in Mensa because people get her jokes, does Sharron deserve to remain a member?

## **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 always wanted to go for a ride in a flying saucer. Where can I buy a ticket? Do they offer first class? Are drinks complimentary or a la carte?*

*Astronomic Aspirant*

*Dear AA,*

*I've not had this question before so let me think about for a while. There. That's enough thinking.*

*You're nuts! At least that's what the USA Secret Government (read: MJ-12) has wanted everyone to think when the subject of UFOs comes up. By the way... they're no longer UFOs (Unidentified Flying Objects). They're now UAPs (Unidentified Aerial Phenomena). I done did some research and here's what I've found.*

*In July of 1947, there was a violent storm near the Brazel ranch near Roswell, New Mexico. The following morning, rancher Mac Brazel was out on his land and found weird metal scattered about. He gathered some, reported what he thought might be a plane crash to the local sheriff, who contacted the local Air Force base. The AF announced to the media that a crashed alien flying saucer had been recovered. The next day they recanted and said it was a weather balloon. That was when the cover-up officially started. Since then, enough witnesses and Top Secret government documents have been found to prove that the Roswell crash did*

Gabbie goes on...

*happen, that it involved one (perhaps two) alien craft, and that the government has reverse engineered much of what was in the craft(s) (stuff like transistors, fiber optics & lots more), and that they even had one live alien EBE (Extraterrestrial Biological Entity) that died sometime in the 1950s.*

*So now this is now. There's been plenty of alien contact theorizing, plenty of covering up, plenty of calling qualified and trained observers and technical sorts lunatics for claiming to have seen UAPs, gone for rides in them, had telepathic conversations with bug-eyed little guys with four fingers per hand, and of course, mucho, mucho alien contact movies.*

*Me? I've never seen a UAP. I've never been for a ride in one. I've never had the purpose of The Universe explained to me telepathically, and frankly, I don't know how I would respond if any of that stuff happened to me. I might think it was way cool, or I might immediately go straight off the rails and jump into the nearest strait jacket. At best, it would be unsettling.*

*But do I believe in aliens? I stand with Enrico Fermi, who responded when asked about the gazillions of planets orbiting the billions of stars, "Where is everybody?" I believe that aliens are here, have been watching humans (a somewhat primitive and cantankerous life form) for millennia, and that they're probably watching Ukraine with great interest, and that if Putin uses his nukes, the aliens will simply shrug and go find another species to study.*

*As for obtaining a ticket for a flying saucer ride, sorry, I can't help you with that. You're on your own. Have a couple more whiskeys. You'll feel better. And start sleeping under your bed, just in case they come for you in the night.*

*Your way cool observer of all kind of phenomena (but I haven't seen one of these... yet),*

*Gabbie*



## Strange Questions (& Stranger Answers)

by Grace Lehto

### What puzzles you?

Last month we asked “What causes stalagmites to form in my ice cube tray?” Several members offered this explanation: The water on the outside of the ice-cube-to-be freezes first, with the temperature drop progressing toward the center. Sometimes the frozen shell compresses the water remaining inside, pushing it in the direction of least resistance – up!

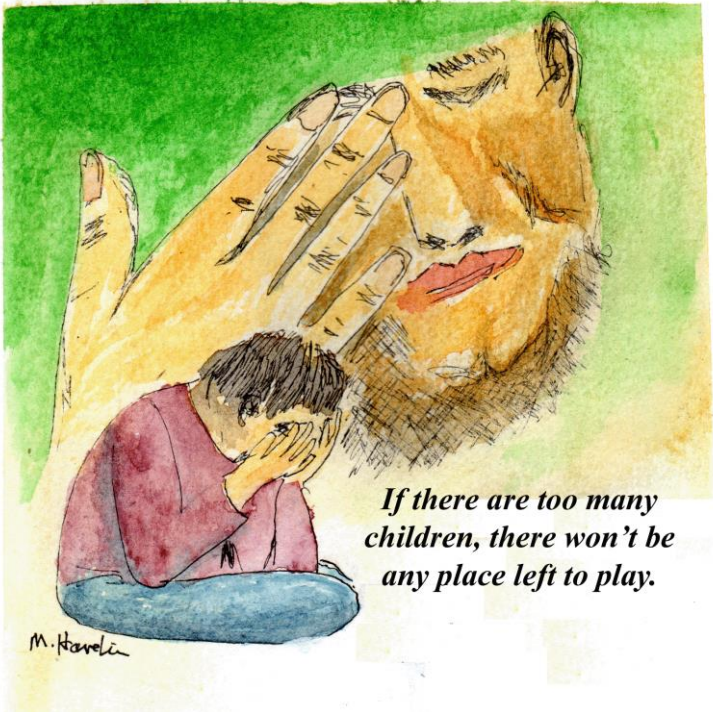
This time, we’d like to know why the shape of a quarter-pound stick of butter on the West Coast of the USA is different from a stick of the same quantity on the East Coast? California 4-ounce butter sticks measure 1.5”x3.1”, while around here we get 1.3”x4.8” sticks. Where is the continental divide on butter?



And while we’re at it, how about the questions you’ve wondered about?

Send an e-mail to [gracelehto@yahoo.com](mailto:gracelehto@yahoo.com) to posit your question or possibly to answer someone else’s question.





*If there are too many  
children, there won't be  
any place left to play.*

## ***Bob & the Bobettes***

Breaking News: The Bobettes are still growing, perhaps a little more slowly. They're enjoying some spring sunshine these days, and (we hope) developing sweetness as they mature. Plantnanny ***Grace Lehto*** continues to pamper them.



***What does the future hold for Bob and the Bobettes?***





## ***Executive Committee Report***

The Executive Committee met Monday, April 4 at The Village Porch in north Asheville. Officers and advisors present were Sharron Armel, Grace Lehto, Will McGuffin and Wayne Stanko.

*Nominating Committee:* Will (as Nominating Committee Chair) gave an update on the status of recruiting members to run for the 2023-24 offices to be elected later this year.

*Scholarships:* Wayne (as Scholarship Chair) will soon have the final results from American Mensa regarding scholarships to be awarded this year. Then we will be able to award our local scholarship to the candidate with the highest score (excluding any who have received national awards).

*Website:* Follow-up deferred to a subsequent meeting.

Locations for June events were established; FBM funding of 50% of the cost of the Lake Lure boat tour was suggested.

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

### ***The Haiku Habit***

*(Please send yours!)*

When the last game ends,  
The king and the pawn both go  
Into the same box.

## **Treasurer's Report**

Closing Balance at March 31, 2022 ..... \$5,733.98

Receipts:

    Monthly subsidy from Am. Mensa .....\$116.05

Total Receipts ..... \$116.05

Disbursements:

    Newsletter materials.....\$21.38

    Post park clean-up lunch ..... 155.00

Total Disbursements ..... \$176.38

Closing Balance at March 31, 2022 ..... \$5,673.65

Annual Financial Report has been submitted to American Mensa, as required.

Submitted by **Wayne Stanko**, Treasurer



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## ***French Broad Mensa Contacts***

**National Office**...817-607-0090...[AmericanMensa@mensa.org](mailto:AmericanMensa@mensa.org)

### **Region 5 Vice-Chairman**

Nancy Campbell ..... 704-533-3351 ..... [RVC5mail@gmail.com](mailto:RVC5mail@gmail.com)

### **French Broad Mensa Elected Officers:**

**Executive Committee** (January 2021- December 2022)

#### **Local Secretary**

Sharron Armel ..... 828-280-6234 ..... [sharronarmel@gmail.com](mailto:sharronarmel@gmail.com)

#### **Deputy Local Secretary**

Grace Lehto ..... [gracelehto@yahoo.com](mailto:gracelehto@yahoo.com)

#### **Treasurer**

Wayne Stanko ..... 828-253-8781 ..... [wstanko@charter.net](mailto:wstanko@charter.net)

#### **Member-at-Large**

Johanna Dokter ..... [johannadillo@gmail.com](mailto:johannadillo@gmail.com)

### **French Broad Mensa Appointed Officers:**

#### **Editor**

Sharron Armel ..... 828-280-6234 ..... [sharronarmel@gmail.com](mailto:sharronarmel@gmail.com)

#### **Publisher**

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#### **Webmaster**

Lizz Russell ..... [lizz@dnet.net](mailto:lizz@dnet.net)

#### **Testing Coordinator**

Wayne Stanko ..... 828-253-8781 ..... [wstanko@charter.net](mailto:wstanko@charter.net)

#### **Ombudsman**

Will McGuffin ..... 828-274-5050 ..... [wmcguffin@gmail.com](mailto:wmcguffin@gmail.com)

**S.I.G.H.T.** ..... Position Open

#### **Scholarship Chair**

Wayne Stanko ..... 828-253-8781 ..... [wstanko@charter.net](mailto:wstanko@charter.net)

**Membership Coordinator** ..... Position Open

#### **Advisors**

Michael Havelin ..... [havelin@yahoo.com](mailto:havelin@yahoo.com)

Will McGuffin ..... 828-274-5050 ..... [wmcguffin@gmail.com](mailto:wmcguffin@gmail.com)



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