



**The French Broad Mensa Newsletter**

# ***BROADCAST***

**Vol. 29, No. 1, January 2023**

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

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***Cover Art***

***The Tule Tree***

2000-year-old Montezuma Cypress

See page 12 for related article.

by ***Rosalie Rogers***

***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  
January 2023**

***So much fun it won't fit on just one page!***

**Monday, January 2, 11:30am: Executive Committee Meeting**  
at The Madness, 1020 Merrimon Ave. in Asheville  
RSVP by December 31 to **Sharron Armel** (828) 280-6234.

**Friday, January 6, 11:30am: First Friday Lunch**  
at La Rumba, 105 River Hills Road, Suite C in Asheville  
(Turn off Wood Avenue, then right turn around buildings).  
If you plan to attend, please contact **Fae Armstrong**:  
[one4fae2@yahoo.com](mailto:one4fae2@yahoo.com) or 828-575-0121

**Saturday, January 14, 3:00pm: "Bean to Bar" Chocolate Tour**



At French Broad Chocolate Factory,  
821 Riverside Dr. in Asheville  
Note: This is the Riverside Drive factory, not  
the downtown shop!

[Tours – French Broad Chocolates](#)

Members and guests will pay \$7 to **Sharron** at  
the door; FBM will cover the rest of the cost.  
RSVP by January 5 to **Sharron Armel**  
(828) 280-6234.

**Wednesday, January 25 and/or February 8: Games, Chats, Drinks!**  
4pm to 7pm or later at Kingmaker's Draft, 101 S. Main St. in  
Hendersonville

If at least 6 people confirm for either date, we may be able to reserve the  
venue's private event room. If fewer than 6 reply, or just happen to drop  
in, **Fred** will be there to welcome you.

Look for his unique Mensa hat!

RSVP ASAP to **Fred Tucker**,  
[fctiv@mac.com](mailto:fctiv@mac.com)



**Thursday, January 26, 6:00pm: Thu.D!**

at Post 25, 2155 Hendersonville Rd in Arden

RSVP by January 23 to *Sharron Armel* (828) 280-6234.

**Planning ahead...**

**Sunday, February 26, 1:00-3:00pm: Model Trains Station**



250 Mill Street, Taylors, SC

[Model Trains Station — Family fun at the Taylors Mill in Greenville, SC](#)

Cost: \$10 adult, \$6 child, \$8 senior and military

*Fred* will be there, wearing that hat!

RSVP if interested to *Fred Tucker*,

[fctiv@mac.com](mailto:fctiv@mac.com)

Where would YOU like to gather with Mensa friends?

The Executive Committee  
welcomes your suggestions!

RSVPs are important for table planning, and many public eateries are still operating at limited capacity and/or reduced staffing. Please respond if you plan to attend an event. If you don't, the venue 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 only to members & guests who are fully-vaccinated against COVID.**

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



## ***Regional Vice Chairman's Message***



Happy Holidays to everyone, whether you celebrated Hannukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, or some other holiday!

I want to start this month's column by reminding everyone that there are several ways to connect with other Mensans. If your Local Group has live events that are near enough to attend, by all means, go to them. If you are in the boonies, there are still options. You can

attend an event at another Local Group at will. Go to [us.mensa.org](https://us.mensa.org), sign in, and click on Read. Enter the name of the group you'd like to check out and the current month, and see what they are offering. I do this most years when I visit my daughter in Los Angeles. They have a great restaurant event in the Bay area on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (but sadly, not this year.) Another option is to join a Zoom event from the comfort of your armchair. Again, this is not limited by geography. National has a page of Virtual Options which is improving every month. Or go to Charlotte Blue Ridge Mensa's newsletter and see their list of great national Zooms. Finally, go to a Regional Gathering (RG) or the Annual Gathering (AG.) See below for details.

Next Regional Gathering (RG) in Region 5: Mensa World Games, February 10-12, 2023 in Birmingham, AL. Join them for games and activities, or just come hear some speakers or hang out in Hospitality and soak up the atmosphere. Registration includes snacks and drinks in Hospitality as well as Dinner Friday night, Breakfast and Lunch on Saturday, and Breakfast on Sunday morning. Adult registration is \$60 until January 1, 2023. Visit [tinyurl.com/CAM2023RG](https://tinyurl.com/CAM2023RG) for more information.

The next Annual Gathering (AG) will be in Baltimore, MD from July 5 to 9, 2023. Visit [AG.us.mensa.org](https://AG.us.mensa.org) for more information.

Again, Happy Holidays!

***Nancy Campbell***, RVC5  
704-533-3351 or [RVC5mail@gmail.com](mailto:RVC5mail@gmail.com)

## **Local Secretary's Message**



Wondering how to beat the winter blahs? Maybe some new Mensa events will add to your fun. Member ***Fred Tucker*** has researched some entertainment opportunities for us, focusing on Hendersonville and points south. Check out the two newest ideas in the Events Calendar on pages 3 and 4. What kinds of things would you like to do? All suggestions are welcome.

Welcome to members joining or rejoining FBM:

***Catherine Parrill***

***Lance Wisely***

Happy Mensa Anniversaries to:

***Talon Byers***

***Larry Manofsky***

***Maria Douglass***

***Rich Miller***

***Warren Hargis***

***Rilyn Miller***

***Richard Heim***

***David Stroud***

***Mark Hunter***

***Kenneth Workman***

***Brian Iacoponi***

***Karen Youket***

***Marie Lewis***

***Suzanne Zoss***

***Jerri Lincoln***

Happy January Birthdays to:

***Randy Farmer***

***Robert McCurdy***

***Charles Gurslin***

***David Pereda***

***Mark Hunter***

***James Stewart***

***Lawrence Latimer***

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)

## ***Holiday Party***

On December 10, ***Dawn Hardin*** welcomed French Broad Members to her home for our annual holiday celebration.



Our Three Wise Men:

***Lan Sluder***

***Will McGuffin***

***Wayne Stanko***

***Karen Youket***  
***Will McGuffin***  
***Brian Johnson***



Eat  
Drink  
Be Merry!





Welcome Committee “Baxter”



- Judy Bonnar*  
*Brian Johnson*  
*Karen Youket*  
*Sandy Stoddard*  
*Fae Armstrong*  
*Grace Lehto*



Many thanks to **Michael Havelin** for photos, and to **Dawn** for her generous hospitality!!

## **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 was at my neighborhood bar the other day and some jerk was talking 'bout somethin' sounded like "a pack 'o lips" and I was wondering' what the (expletive deleted) he was talkin' 'bout was he talkin' 'bout when the earth gets stuck in front of the sun and you can't see the moon no more, huh?*

*Yer pal,  
Star Geezer*

*Dearest Starstricken,*

*I'm amazed at the breadth of your knowledge of the cosmos. You know what that is, doncha? It's where we live, doncha know. In fact, it's where everything lives, including you, me, and all the babes you think you'll find in that bar... But that's an entirely different sort of problem for discussion at another time... if we have any time left.*

*Let me enlighten you. You misheard your drinkin' buddy. What he was talkin' 'bout was The Apocalypse, meaning the end of the world, the end of humanity, the end of everything. That's right. No more car or college loan payments, forget your mortgage, or going in to work every day for that measly paycheck at end of the week. And no more having to run the bars trying to find a willing sexual partner for the evening's predation and entertainment, neither.*

*Speaking of which, did you know that there are too many people on the planet now? Right! There's eight billion of us. They decided that some human female baby born in the Dominican Republic was identified as the eight billionth human. (I have no idea how they figured that out.) They're gonna give her a Cuisinart, a pink Cadillac or some such gadget as a booby prize, I guess.*

*Anyway, to my overwhelmed mind, that's about seven billion humans too many. We've exceeded the carrying capacity of the planet. Too many people. Too much pressure on resources. The planet can't handle it. And I can't either*

*Just look at the mess we've made. We've invented politics, cut down forests, dug huge holes to get at the minerals in the earth's crust, stolen the lands of indigenous peoples, murdered millions of our fellow creatures (human and otherwise) for their skins and meat, discovered the destructive power of the atom. We're really some clever monkeys, all right.*

*Our latest triumphs are choking the oceans (which are pretty big, y'know) with plastic debris, depleting the ocean's formerly inexhaustible fish stocks, and scattering our trash and other miscellany on the pristine moon and in the space around our benighted planet. What do you think we're gonna do when we get to Mars? It's doomed to become yet another garbage dump. And if we find life there or elsewhere, our first response will be to pull the trigger. I doubt that our nature and approach will change. Clever monkeys, indeed)*

*So, good luck with finding a mate. Let's hear a cheer for fecundity. Did you ever kick an anthill open? That's us in miniature... billions of us reproducing, reproducing, reproducing mindlessly because babies are "cute" and cuddly. And did you notice that every single human is on his/her/its own individual agenda... laws, family planning and IRAs notwithstanding? It's a completely anarchic unplanned chaos. Carry on, humans.*

*Your appalled yet sardonically gleeful prognosticator,  
Gabbie*

# OAXACA

by *Rosalie Rogers*



Randy and I spent one fun-filled and educational week in Oaxaca, Mexico, in October. The tour was offered through Maya Exploration Center, which gave us an opportunity to better understand the ancient ruins and to celebrate the modern culture as well.

Oaxaca is a beautiful Spanish Colonial city, although its history goes back much further. The historic district maintains the facades of the five hundred year old buildings.

Chocolaterias, restaurants, and rooftop terrace bars are interwoven into the ancient architecture. Local markets or mercados offer an abundance of food, flowers, and chocolate. We sampled some of the local delicacies, including roasted grasshopper (crunchy!). We even met a witch who was selling bags of dried herbs for specific ailments.



Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is their time to remember and honor those who have departed. Celebrated on November 1 and 2, it is said that on the holiday, the spirits of the dead return home for the night to visit their living loved ones. As the local residents set up altars to honor their ancestors, they also beautified the town and cemeteries in order to welcome the spirits. Marigolds were used abundantly. In some cases favorite brands of liquor and cigarettes are placed on the grave for the enjoyment of the deceased.



The first archaeological site we visited was the hilltop center of San Jose Mogote. One of the earliest Mesoamerican sites (1500 BCE), it is believed to have been the Zapotec center for 1,000 years prior to the more famous Monte Alban. Previous excavations suggest that this site once had 35 public buildings, including men's houses, one-room temples, a performance platform, two-room state temples, a ballcourt, and two types of palaces. Archaeologists have found Mexico's oldest

known defensive palisades and the first evidence of Zapotec hieroglyphic writing. All that remains today is one pyramid and a ballcourt. The local people have stopped allowing outside excavations but are now excavating a wall in the pyramid mound.

Monte Alban was the highlight of the tour for us. At 7000 feet in elevation, it is a majestic site in a majestic setting. The terraces, pyramids, and mounds were carved out of the mountain. Although there is ample evidence of ceremonial structures, this place was home to 17,000 Zapotec, Mixtec, and Olmec residents. It flourished as the Zapotec capital for 13 centuries.



The excavation of Monte Alban's tomb 7 yielded one of the richest archaeological finds ever. Artifacts included nine skeletons and over 500 grave offerings. Treasures including jade necklaces, bone carvings, bead work, mosaic plaques, and gold breastplates and ornaments are on display in the heavily guarded Santo Domingo Archaeology Museum.

A surprise visit to the Tule Tree (cover picture this month) gave this nature lover a story for our tree hugging friends back home. A world champion tree, it is a 2000 year old Montezuma Cypress with a diameter of 46 feet. Although the broad crown makes an exact measurement difficult, it is thought to be at least 116 feet tall.

Mitla is the second-most important archaeological site in the state of Oaxaca and the most important of the Zapotec culture. It was a religious center, and what remains is covered with elaborate and intricate mosaic fretwork and geometric design. Mitla was home to the high priest. His palace had a guest wing to accommodate the Zapotec ruler on his occasional visits, although even the ruler was not allowed to look directly on the high priest. When the Catholic Archbishop ordered the destruction of Mitla, the Spanish soldiers tore down the temples and built a cathedral. However, aware of the veneration of the high priest, they could not bring themselves to destroy his palace.

Our final stop was the Zaachila. Following the fall of Monte Alban, Zaachila became the last Zapotec capitol. It was the home of Donaji, the last Zapotec princess. Although much of the area has been lost to development, there is a small archaeological site. A mound containing two tombs is accessible to visitors. One of the tombs has a painted lintel which is thought to depict skulls and crossbones over a red colored background. This mural is under study by Mexico's Institute of Aesthetic Research. Today there is an annual festival on this site to honor the corn goddess.

## ***Strange Questions (& Stranger Answers)***

*by Grace Lehto*

### ***What puzzles you?***

Last month's question:

Nearly 5 years ago, FBM member **Bill Smith** of Cherokee asked this question, and we STILL don't have an answer!

When I made a cup of instant coffee recently, I used a cheap 12-oz china mug that was cold. After I poured in the hot water and stirred the mix, I tapped the edge of the mug twice to knock the coffee off the spoon. I noticed two different tones or notes. (I'm not sure what term to use as I'm not musical.) I kept tapping the edge of the mug and the sound kept changing. It started off high I think and went right down the scale. I first thought the change was caused by the swirling coffee slowing down but now think it was from the cup warming up. Does anyone know?

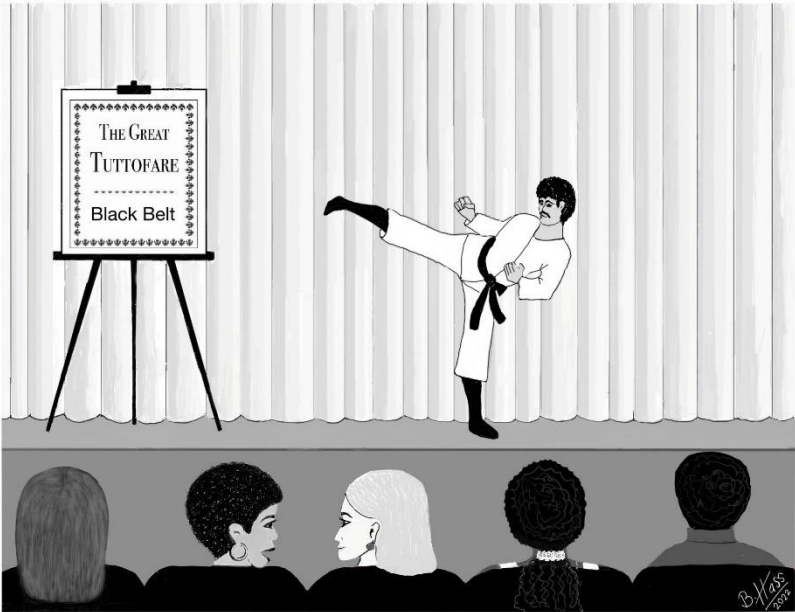


STILL no answer? Let's think about it for another month.

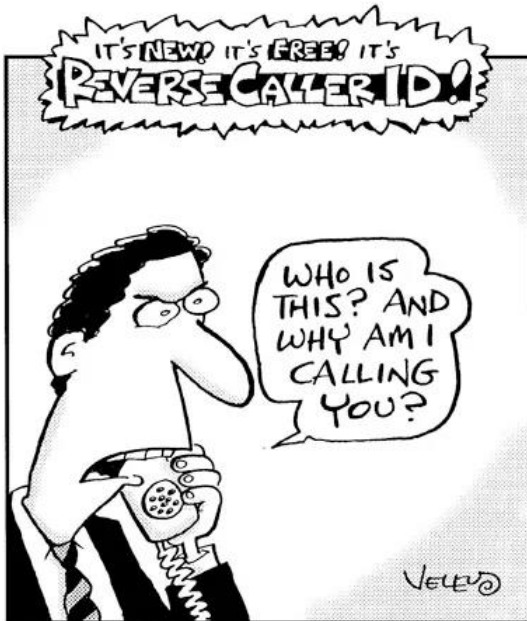
And while we're at it, how about the questions you've wondered about?

Send an e-mail to

[gracelehto@yahoo.com](mailto:gracelehto@yahoo.com) to posit your question or answer.



*"Tuttofare loves martial arts. He really gets a kick out of it."*



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## ***Executive Committee Report***

The Executive Committee met Monday, December 5 at Mr. Kabab in East Asheville. Members and advisors present were ***Sharron Armel, Grace Lehto, Michael Havelin, Will McGuffin, and Wayne Stanko.*** ***Dawn Hardin*** was welcomed as a guest.

### *Executive Committee Elections:*

***Brian Johnson***, Nominating/Elections Chair, reported recently that he had received 11 ballots within a few days of the newsletter's mailing. He will authenticate all ballots by comparing the member numbers to an official list from American Mensa. ***Brian*** will let the Executive Committee know the results by December 31. The Executive Committee again thanks ***Brian*** for serving in this capacity.

### *Scholarship Update:*

Essays will continue to be forwarded to us through January 15 by American Mensa. At that time, ***Sharron*** will compile a master document and forward it to judges ***Michael Havelin, Will McGuffin, and Dawn Hardin.*** American Mensa has worked hard to improve the online process for recording scores, and those testing it are optimistic it will meet our needs.

### *Printer Recognition:*

The Executive Committee considered the valuable service that member ***David Diehn*** (Clark Communications) provides for us, free of charge. We estimate that the annual value of printing our newsletter exceeds \$2,000. The Committee voted to express our thanks to ***David*** with a \$250 gift card to Ingles; ***Wayne*** will buy and deliver the gift card when picking up our next batch of newsletters.

### *Events:*

The Committee thanks ***Fred Tucker*** for his willingness to find and schedule some new events in the southern area of our region. ***Sharron*** will coordinate publicity with Fred for inclusion in the newsletter and notices by e-mail blasts to members.

Locations for other future events were established.

### *Holiday Party:*

Final details for our holiday party to be held Saturday, Dec. 10 at Dawn's home were settled.

Submitted by *Grace Lehto*, Deputy Local Secretary

**Treasurer's Report**

Closing Balance at October 3, 2022..... \$3,788.45

Receipts:

Monthly subsidy from Am. Mensa ..... \$109.10

Total Receipts..... \$109.10

Disbursements:

Mailing Labels ..... \$21.38

Roll of stamps ..... 60.00

Total Disbursements..... \$81.38

Closing Balance at November 30, 2022..... \$3,816.17

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**

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

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

#### **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** ..... Position Open

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

#### **Scholarship Chair**

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

#### **Scholarship Assistant 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)



# BROADCAST

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