

The

SCAM

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2002 Newsletter Owl Nominee



Happy Thanksgiving!

Volume 20, No. 11

November, 2002

*The
Newsletter*
SCAM
Space Coast Area Mensa

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Happy November Birthday

02 – Barron Perry

06 – William McClure, Jr.

11 – Jane Saubert

19 – Jean Porter

21 – John England

22 – Aron Travis

25 – Kevin Hall

25 – David Williams

30 – Thomas Gachet

30 – Lisa Willnow



Welcome to SCAM and Mensa

Ellen Nevins – Vero Beach

Welcome to SCAM

Nobody New This Month

Welcome Back to SCAM

Nobody New This Month



**On the
Firing Line**



J.T. Moran

SCAM Editor

Why are you a member of Mensa? Although I have been a member for just over 10 years, I feel I can speak with some authority to that question for the majority of Mensans. And the answer I would provide is: "I really don't know!"

Sure, I could have given the usual responses: "Because I'm a genius", or "I passed the test". But those responses are trite and self-evident.

Perhaps the question should be: "Why did you join Mensa?"

If you were like me, you took the test for personal reasons, primarily to see how well you would do. But, when you received the offer of membership, why did you send in your hard-earned bucks?

Some of you did it to merely be able to place "member of Mensa" on your résumé. You had no interest in the social part of the organization, and became what is known as a "coffee table Mensan", one who merely likes to display the *Bulletin* on the living room table.

Others paid for a year and then dropped out, finding that the organization really had nothing to offer for them.

Still others joined and became active in the social life of the group... for a little while. Then they sort of faded away, becoming little more than a "... I wonder what happened to..." in conversations, or a name on the group membership roster.

Some, however, found Mensa to be exactly what they were looking for. They found kindred spirits and keen minds to interact with and share experiences with. They found stimulation and companionship in others with both similar and different mindsets and ways of looking at life.

These are the active Mensans, the ones whose social calendar is primarily predicated upon the monthly group activities. These are the members who are the doers of the group, the volunteers. They make up the Executive Committee and the RG Committee, and fill most of the other group offices. They host most of the activities that occur on the monthly calendar, and make up the majority of those who attend those functions. Without them, there would be very little "social" in the organization.

But, what motivates these members? The same things that motivate active members of any organization. Some do it because they want to do it, and it needs to be done for the group. You never have, and you never can have, enough members like these.

Some do it because somebody has to do it. They don't want to, but their sense of duty forces them to do what the group needs to have done. Many groups could not function without many of these.

And then there are those who do it as a method of self-aggrandizement. Not because the group needs it, but to stroke their own

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Mewsing About



Clara

**Woodall-Moran,
LocSec**

RGs come, and RGs go. Most RGs provide entertainment, edification/education, food, and a time to catch up with far-flung friends. If you don't take advantage of this one real benefit of Mensa that is your loss. This Rollback RG from SCAM will be, as usual, a lot of all of the above listed provisions. We hold our test session at the RG and provide day-tickets to those who take the test.

Out of our 200+ membership, less than 15% had registered by the time this column was written on October 14th. To those who attended we say a heart-felt: "Thank you." While we would like to have had more local attendees, we appreciate those who do take the time to come out and party with us.

Usually a Nominations and Elections committee for this group is named in January, and the members of the committee have until April to find at least 5 people to sign up as potential members of the Executive Committee. This year is going to be a bit different from the normal procedure because, as the current Local Secretary, I am appealing to the entire membership to give strong consideration to being a member of the Executive Committee. Of the current officers, several are not going to be able to continue to serve the group; the editor is going to be hanging up his dictionary and thesaurus as well, so you can see that we need to fill many vacancies. We need to also fill the audit committee to go over the books, a reconciliation audit and this committee has also been hard to fill. Hence, we are looking for 3 people for the Nominations/Elections committee; 3 people for the audit committee; and at least 5 people for the Executive committee and one person to become the editor. Look inside yourselves and decide how important Space Coast Area Mensa is to you.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

ego. Or for the power trip. Or because of Mensa political ambitions. There are any number of groups that have ExComms run by these members, mainly because nobody else in the group is willing to do the job.

The trouble is, nothing destroys a group faster than political infighting. It is why new blood is actively sought by the ExComms of successful groups.

Unfortunately, new blood is found rather infrequently, so the old blood that has been running the show, and doing what must be done, begins to burn out. When it does, and nobody steps forward to shoulder the burden, the group fails and folds.

This group is in dire need of new blood. How about donating some? It is the gift of life for the group.



**The Casebook of
Anthony Chianti,
Private Eye**



Ken Thornton-Smith

© 2002

**The Wabasso Triangle: Episode –273°
Do Loop While Not End of File**

It should not have happened, but one thing is certain: it did happen. Defying the Laws of Physics, Garbage Collection Days and Forward-Looking Statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1934, the Wabasso Triangle has struck again.

This month, back by popular demand – the surviving miracle of modern medicine, Anthony Chianti, of whom a doctor once said, “It’s a boy!”

Lonely Licensed Private Eye and Indian River Community Pasta Detective, yadda, yadda, reporting:

It was Thursday, and it started just like any other ordinary Thursday: computer problems. The server was up at last, but we still had a Local Area Network. Even so, it was a day that will go down in Pasta Detective history, the day the telephone rang:

“Good morning, is that Anthony Chianti?”

“Yes, but whatever it is you’re selling, I’m not interested...” Click.

It was probably another one of those ‘Guide Dogs for the Deaf’ scams. I returned to the crossword, which was going well until I got to 27 Down: ‘Florida State Flower’. Obviously, the official State Flower of Florida is ‘mold’, but in 13 letters I could write moldmoldmold and still have a space left over...

The phone rang again – “HELLO!” I bellowed – this was getting old.

“Is that Anthony Chianti?”

“YES? AND?”

“Anthony Chianti, the Private Detective?”

“Er, yes, that’s me.”

“I wonder if you’d be interested in taking on a case?”

“A case? Oh... a case! Let me think about that for a second... yes, that would be possible – I think we can fit you in...”

“Mr. Chianti, you must help me, you see, my son...”

“I’m sorry, Missus... er?”

“Rigaty – Penny Rigaty. And you can drop the Missus – I already dropped the Mister.”

“Yes, Mrs. Rigaty, we shouldn’t talk about this over the ‘phone – can we meet up to discuss this?”

“Of course – can I come to your office?”

“Well, you could, but I was about to suggest a working lunch, say, 12.30 at the Shy Knees Restaurant on 5th Ave?”

I held my breath – if she was going to come here, it would mean an hour

with a broom playing cockroach croquet...

“That would be wonderful – I’ll see you there.”

What a charming voice – reminded me of my first girlfriend, Sue Kee-nybread. I used to maneuver just to stand next to Sue in line, hoping the school bus would be late. School – such a romantic place when you’re seven. And there it was, in huge letters down the side of the bus: CANAL ALIMENTARY. Sigh...

Location: The Shy Knees Lesterwant

We met up outside and soon found ourselves seated at a quiet, expense-deductible corner table and studying the Shy Knees menu, which makes the Warren Commission Report look like light reading:

Szechuan River Trout with Shallots and Fresh Figs

Götterdämmerung was not, according to Wagner, an Opera at all, but one of his later ‘Gesamtkunstwerken’ music-drama pieces. As we follow Siegfried’s adventures down the Rhine, we ponder that Gesamtkunstwerke means ‘Total Art Form’ and we sincerely trust that you will enjoy this entrée – Spicy River Trout with Sautéed Shallots and Fresh Figs – our own humble little attempt at ‘Total Art Form’.

“That sounds great, doesn’t it Mr. Chianti?”

“That’s exactly the problem, Penny – may I call you Penny? – Bear in mind where we are. Here, on the northern edge of the Wabasso Triangle... “

“AHEM? You leddy to horder?” The waiter interrupted us.

We eventually settled on two of the specials, and, as soon as he left, Penny said:

“That’s him – the last time I saw my son he was with that man, the waiter... You have to help me, Mr. Chianti; my son has joined a cult. Please rescue him – he’s changed – he’s in the grip of... The Chefs...”

“Not...The Chefs? Are you sure?”

I’d heard a lot about The Chefs – an evil mind-control and creative accounting cult founded by N. Ron Hubbard. Their name comes from a Securities and Exchange Commission agent, who handed back a set of books with the comment, “My compliments to the chef!”

“Yes, definitely... “ She spoke softly and I paid attention – Penny looked way too young to have a 20-something son, “Hadrian mentioned The Chefs before he disappeared...”

The Chef’s spiritual leader, N. Ron Hubbard, rose to fame during the ‘dot-com’ era and disappeared from sight until the Chefs were cited in some high-profile lawsuits. Now they lure unsuspecting CPAs into a life of cult indoctrination, harsh asceticism and short-term equity gain.

The waiter looked familiar. Positively oozing communist weltanschmerz, he might even be Sun Lo Shun, a prominent member of Camaro Rouge, the radical sun-tanned left-wing phalangist breakaway section of the Indian River Triad. But how could they be connected to The Chefs? Their

ideologies were poles apart. The plot thickened, which was exactly what needed to happen to this Egg-Drop Soup – any thinner and you could put it in a mister and spray the Bromeliads...

I returned to my office, excited at last to have real case to sink my teeth into, not to mention a very attractive client... but was I ready for another relationship? Had I recovered from Princess Brain Damage? The school of hard knocks had taught me the basic rule of relationships: You can be picky or needy, but not both at the same time...

It felt good to get back to work and take my mind off things. I was cranking until 23 Across: 'Elton John's big events?' I already had the crosswords, which gave me SPECTACLES, but it didn't make any sense, as his last concert tour was a flop. Something was wrong somewhere, and for once it wasn't Detective Inspector "Raving" Ravioli of the Serious Pasta Crimes Squad getting on my case for getting on his case. This can mean only one thing: The Wabasso Triangle had struck again!

As students of psycho-economics will already be aware, The Wabasso Triangle is an area where the laws of Physics as we know them break down. That, and Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures – they break down, too.

Like Tuesday, when I tried for two hours to balance my checkbook. There was a pencil mark from before, but those last two checks – Dr. Pepperoni's and Pastaholics Anonymous – somehow they must have pushed the center of gravity well to the left. Carefully, I moved the knitting needle...

The phone jarred me from my reverie, "Chianti? Wassup?"

"Oh, hi – been trying to contact you guys, I have a little job for you..." Ahmed and Dane Gerous are the local 'odd-job' outfit that takes care of the shadier side of the private detective industry. Officially, they didn't exist, but everyone referred to their little business as 'The Thrifty Knuckle'... "So, Dane, what do you know about The Chefs?"

Ten minutes later they filled the doorway to my office:

"Too risky, might be out of our league, messing with The Chefs..."

"Yeah, kinda business yer havta approach with the right demeanor..."

"Right, like, de meaner de better..." They grinned at each other in a knowing way that suggested a combined IQ of 100 on a hot day.

"What can you tell me about the new waiter at The Shy Knees... and a youngster – Hadrian Rigaty...?"

"I fink we don't know nuffink – that right Dane?"

"Not 'til we get a PO, that's right, Ahmed, we don't know nuffink..."

I slipped Dane a hundred-dollar bill and they winked in unison as they left.

It took a couple of days, and for once they managed to make some progress without breaking any bones. Saturday I enthusiastically told Penny the good news over dinner:

“Penny, there’s nothing to worry about – it’s completely kosher. Hadrian had his phone cut off, that’s all. And he really is training to become a chef – the waiter is in the same Culinary Arts college as your son – I knew you’d be pleased – you must have misunderstood...”

“Me? Misunderstood? You think I’m stupid?” She upended the spicy river trout with fresh figs on my head and stormed out.

Well, I don’t know how it happened, probably just years of experience as a Community Pasta Detective, but then, in a flash of intuition, it just dawned on me: I don’t understand women. Confusing, but nothing that a pint of Pernod wouldn’t cure.

Amazing but true, and it can only have happened here. That’s about it for this month’s update from the Wabasso Triangle.

Anthony Chianti, Indian River Community Pasta Detective, signing off.



Your Health



Osteoporosis

Ann Schindler

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The human skeleton provides support and protection for the body. The adult human body is made up of 206 bones. At birth, an infant has 270 bones, but many fuse together during infancy and childhood. Bone marrow, found within the bones, produces red and white blood cells and platelets. The bones also store calcium and other essential minerals. Though the word “skeleton” is derived from a Greek word for “dried up,” bones are living tissue that can strengthen with exercise or weaken with abuse.

Bones grow and reach their peak mass between the ages of 28 and 32. Bone mass is then maintained by remodeling, a process of breaking down and building up of bone tissue. The breakdown, called resorption, is performed by cells called osteoclasts. These cells secrete acids and enzymes that dissolve old bone, releasing calcium into the bloodstream, and leaving a small cavity. Osteoblasts are the bone-building cells that fill in the cavity created by the osteoclasts. Osteoblasts will become trapped in the newly formed bone and become mature bone cells called osteocytes. Gradual bone loss occurs because osteoblasts are not as efficient as building bone as osteoclasts are in breaking it down. With time and age, bone can become weaker, less dense, and more prone to fracture. There are 2 types of bone tissue in the human body, cortical and trabecular. Cortical bone is the compact, dense bone found in the shaft of long bones and in the outer shell of the vertebrae and around the ends of the long bones at the joints. It makes up about 80% of the skeleton. Trabecular bone is spongy and cancellous (porous), and, therefore, more susceptible to resorption. Trabecular bone is found in the flat bones (as the pelvis), and within the outer cortical shell of the vertebrae and at the ends of the

long bones. Various hormones that regulate body functions also play a role in remodeling and on the interaction of osteoclasts and osteoblasts. Some of these hormones are estrogen, testosterone, and thyroxin (thyroid hormone).

Osteoporosis is a chronic degenerative bone disease in which the bones become increasingly porous and more prone to fracture. Osteopenia is a condition of low bone density that can progress to osteoporosis. All bones in the body can be affected, though fractures of the spine, wrist, and hip are the most common. Though osteoporosis is generally thought to be a woman's disease, 7% to 15% of the total cases are male, meaning about 2 million American men of all ages have the disease. By age 75, 33% of all men have osteoporosis and suffer fractures. Since the bones of men are stronger and denser than those of women, they are less likely to be affected by the disease process. Other risk factors for both genders include race (highest for White and Asian), family history (higher if a close relative also had it), smoking, alcoholism, sedentary life-style or immobilization, weightlessness, and having a slender body build. A diet low in calcium or vitamin D and high in caffeine or carbonated beverages increases risk. Certain medical conditions and medications, such as steroids, can also increase risk. Antacids that contain aluminum can remove calcium and phosphorus from the bones and cause faster bone degeneration. Menopausal women are at increased risk because of the decreased estrogen, as are men with a low testosterone level. Female athletes have a higher risk because of lower levels of estrogen in their bodies, as are people with eating disorders.

There are no symptoms in the early stages of osteoporosis, but in the later stages, bone fractures begin to occur. When fractures of the vertebrae occur, the spine collapses upon itself causing a forward curvature known as kyphosis or "dowager's hump". This can cause the patient to lose stature, sometimes within as little as a few months and can also cause pain, shortness of breath, constipation, and susceptibility to other diseases as lung infections. When loss of bone occurs in the jaw, increased risk of tooth loss and periodontal disease occurs.

Yearly physical exams should always include a measurement of your height, an indication if osteoporosis has already begun. A bone density scan may be ordered to assess your current bone status. A DEXA scan (Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry) is probably the best and most frequently used. It takes about 20 minutes to complete, exposes the patient to far less radiation than a chest x-ray, and is more accurate than other types of scans.

Several types of medications are available for the treatment of osteoporosis. Most are for women only, but some are approved for either gender. Biphosphonates slow bone loss, increase bone density, and reduce the risk of fractures. Fosamax, Didrocal, and Actonel are several of these drugs.

Medications called SERMs (selective estrogen receptor modulators) act similar to estrogen to prevent bone loss and are prescribed for women only. Raloxifene (Evista) is the first SERM approved by the FDA. Estrogen replacement may be ordered in post-menopausal women to slow erosion of the bone, increase bone density, and prevent fractures. Testosterone replacement is given to men only if their blood levels of testosterone are low. It will not increase bone density in men with normal levels of testosterone. Calcitonin is a hormone, produced by the thyroid gland, and works to slow bone loss by inhibiting the action of osteoclasts. It comes in the form of a nasal spray and can decrease spinal fractures up to 40%.

There are things you can do to help prevent osteoporosis and preserve healthy bones. Change your unhealthy habits. Quit smoking, decrease alcohol intake, and exercise. Weight bearing exercise as walking, climbing stairs, and lifting weights will aid in building muscle and increasing bone strength and density. Exercise also helps with balance and will help you be less likely to fall. Increase your calcium intake to 1000 milligrams (mg) per day if you are under 50 years old, 1200 mg per day if you are over 50 and 1500 mg per day if you have already been diagnosed with osteoporosis. There are several types of calcium tablets available. Calcium carbonate is the most common type. It provides 40% of elemental calcium (the rest is carbonate) and is best absorbed if taken with a meal. This means that a 1,250 mg tablet will provide 500 mg of elemental calcium. Calcium citrate provides 21% elemental calcium, and is the type most easily absorbed. There is also calcium lactate, gluconate, phosphate, and acetate. Whichever one you choose, be sure not to take the entire amount in a single dose. The body can only absorb about 500 mg of elemental calcium at a time. Vitamin D intake should be 400 IU to 600 IU per day, and can be met by 10 minutes of sun exposure per day, 1 quart of fortified milk, or 1 multi-vitamin.

The process of bone remodeling is a normal part of aging, but many things we do can affect its course and slow the process of resorption. If we add more healthy lifestyle changes to our daily living, we will be less likely to become a victim of this devastating disease.

Sources

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***A View... From
Somewhere Else
"Decision 2002"
by
Hank Rhodes
©2002***

The election season is upon us. As we Americans approach the biennial rite of selecting our leaders, we should remember that within the recent past, people elsewhere have risked their own lives while attempting to vote (East Timor, Kashmir, and South Africa come to mind). But all too often here, some of our fellow citizens regard the decisions before them with indifference, or worse yet, as an unnecessary inconvenience.

Of course, it is vitally important to consider the choices before us. We should be looking into the future and attempting to discern where the respective candidates will lead us. There's certainly enough noise out there to distract us. We need to be focused on what is true, measurable, and credible.

In the international arena, it is certainly critical that our armed forces have the means and ability to fight and win wars. This nation must always stand against the aggression of the lawless in the world. Our foreign policy, however, should not simply rest on our strength, but be directed toward a better goal: the prevention of wars. Our nation should strive always to broaden the concepts of human rights and rule of law that we enjoy as Americans. We must be patient yet persistent in cultivating these concepts elsewhere, for this can only occur over a period of years. We should not dictate how others will live, but encourage institutions that serve the interest of the people they govern.

Our efforts, usually following an intervention, to boost other nations out of their history of violence and injustice have been derided by some as "nation building," and characterized as wasteful and quixotic. We should recognize, however, that nation building represents a lesser investment in blood and treasure than the alternative.

While it is impossible to separate self-interest and domestic politics from foreign policy, we should not to allow injustice in certain parts of the world to fester as a result of our disinterest, or in order to appease isolationist voices or narrow commercial interests on the home front. Due to our position as the richest and strongest nation in history, problems abroad are ignored at our own peril, and when circumstances beyond our control dictate, they can become vital concerns overnight. Certainly by now we must recognize there are enough people in this world who will readily exploit a legitimate historic grievance for their own selfish ends.

Within the nation, we need a healthy economy, which is based on full employment and minimal inflation. A healthy economy rests on low public debt, deficit elimination, and a reasonable confidence in the integrity of the system. The government must intervene at times to assure the public interest is served and that criminal behavior is punished. Intervention must not impede broad-based economic development.

The promise of low taxes isn't a substitute for the government's responsibilities. After all, only a masochist enjoys paying taxes. Does any-

November 2002 Calendar of SCAM Events

Membership in American Mensa, Ltd. makes you eligible to attend SCAM social functions. Escorted and invited guests of a member or host are welcome. Adult family members of Mensans are encouraged to participate in SCAM activities, as are well behaved children. However, attendance at any social function in a **private home** is subject to the hospitality of the host. Compliance with published house rules is required, and "Kitty" payment is **not optional**. As a courtesy, notify the host if you plan to attend. Announced hosts should attend their events or arrange for a stand-in if unable. When reservations are required, you may not be able to participate if you fail to call.

S-Smoking; *NS*- No Smoking; *SS*-Separate Smoking Area; *P*-Pets in the home; *NP*-No Pets present; *BYO* -Bring Your Own: *_*Snacks, *_*Drinks, *_*Everything.

Regular Events

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Barnes and Noble: Monday, the 4th & 18th

6:00PM, Merritt Island, across from Merritt Square Mall

C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 13th & 27th

Merritt Square Mall

C.A.B.A.G.E. (South) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 20th

7:00PM, Post Commons, Wickham Road, Melbourne

Spend the evening with friends playing games, drinking gourmet coffee, and devouring sweet treats, and perhaps even reading a bit. It's free (except for any purchases), no pets, and outside smoking.

C.A.B.A.G.E. North Host: Karen Freiberg

lizard_woman@hotmail.com

C.A.B.A.G.E. South Host: Clara Woodall-Moran *cew@cfl.rr.com*

8th Friday	6:00 p.m. Range & Meal costs	Firearms & Fried Rice S/NP
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Time to get your weaponry out of storage and loose a few rounds down range. Meet us at the *Gun Site Range, 124 S. Banana River Dr., Merritt Island.*

J. T. Moran

morwood@cfl.rr.com

9th Saturday	6:00 p.m. Free	Great Books Discussion Group NS/NP
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Come out to *Barnes and Noble on Merritt Island* to join in a discussion of the Great Books. Former local member and friend of SCAM, Luke Setzer, asks us to join him and others in this "shared inquiry" setting. This event will include Mensans and non-Mensans alike, and the recurring theme will be books of interest to Objectivists. The Great Books programs is what the group is currently exploring. Please feel free to contact Luke Setzer ahead of time for further information, or go to the URL listed below full details.

Luke Setzer

http://WideSCOPE.tripod.com

10th Sunday	1:00 p.m. Free	ExComm Meeting SS/NP
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The Executive Committee meets to conduct its monthly business. This month's meeting will be held at the *home of our LocSec, Clara Woodall-Moran, Clara Woodall-Moran (LocSec)* *cew@cfl.rr.com*

10th

NL and Calendar deadlines

All newsletter submissions must be to J.T. no later than today. Ditto for calendar events being to the calendar coordinator.

16th

7:00 p.m.

Movie Night

Saturday

\$3.00

SS/NP

Dan Lange invites us to his apartment for a night of movie watching. His DVD collection awaits. A movie can be chosen by the group and munching and rehashing will, in all likelihood, be included. Dan has a third story walk-up, so the faint-hearted are forewarned! Call Dan for directions.

Dan Lange

dlange@klx.net

17th

11:00 a.m.

Brunch with Jim

Sunday

Meal cost

NS/NP

We'll join Jim for his monthly Sunday brunch at the *Colossus Restaurant* at *380 N. Wickham Rd., Melbourne*. Note: you must be seated no later than 11:00 a.m. or you may not be seated with us: we can't save any seats for late-comers.

Jim Trammell

dulabeans@aol.com

23rd

7:30PM

Games Night

Saturday

\$3.00

SS/NP

Games and nothing more. Well, maybe something more, like food and drink and fun. At *Helen Lee Moore's*.

Helen Lee Moore

76764.3242@compuserve.com

31st

6:30 p.m.

S.N.O.R.T.

Saturday

Meal Cost

SS/NP

Wasabi! Join us at our best-attended monthly event and sample some great Japanese fare; take a break from the turkey and stuffing of Thanksgiving for some sushi and tempura. *Miyako's* is located at *1511 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US1) in Melbourne*.

J.T. Moran

morwood@cfl.rr.com



**And Now, A
Word From
Your Calendar
Coordinator....**

Calendar looks kinda skimpy, don't it? This is what happens when everybody waits for someone else to host a function rather than stepping forward themselves and volunteering.

It is easy to host a function. It doesn't have to be in a person's home, it can be in a public venue such as a restaurant, a movie, or even in a nature preserve. Anyplace to give Mensans a chance to get together.

Any volunteers?



one really believe those who tell us that we can get something for nothing? How committed are we to a better life for ourselves and those who will follow us?

It is in our mutual interest that the environment be preserved, and the damage modern life does to our world be minimized, and eventually, eliminated. Just as the government can foster innovations in the interest of public safety, so too can measures for protecting the environment harness the innovative power of the private sector, providing positive results in a few years that few would have been able to predict. Politicians who want to present this as a zero-sum game of “people” versus “the environment” are only admitting to their lack of commitment and vision.

Another obligation we have to those who come after us lies in the realm of public education. Our education system is one of the pillars of democracy, and should be our pride. Unfortunately Florida, the fourth largest state, ranks 40th in the nation for spending per student. No amount of paid testimonials or accounting tricks will alleviate this embarrassment. Certainly it is desirable to have objective metrics in place to judge performance, but there must be more sustaining measures to achieve excellence beyond the expedient of constant testing.

Certainly, any of us finding a child in distress would do everything in our power to keep it safe. But within our state, there are many children in distress with only a minimal effort made to protect them. Don't we have a commitment to the children who don't have decent homes? Shouldn't we be willing to properly fund their rescue?

During an election year, we should regard “deathbed conversions” with suspicion. This occurs when, after neglecting an issue for most of their term, an incumbent politician will suddenly stage a new imitative based on polling numbers that indicate this issue is a critical weakness for him or her. How often does the promised “better way” ever materialize once the election is over?

It is too easy to be sidetracked by images, sound bites, and trivia. Politicians know this and they exploit us at every opportunity. These days, few seem to be able to resist the temptation of demonizing one's opponent.

Even worse are the attack ads run by benign-sounding organizations that are simply fronts for powerful special interests, executing an agenda in their own favor and often contrary to the public welfare they pretend to represent. Some of these ads that target candidates at the state level are actually funded from groups located out of Florida.

Why do we allow ourselves to be so easily mislead and manipulated?

So, which shall it be? Will we take the easy way, or will we make considered decisions based on the long-term well being of our community, state, and nation? That's the wonderful thing about democracy: we have a choice. And we get to live with the choices that we make.



**The Gourmet's
Guide:**

Spoiled Food

by

Art Belefant

©2002

(belefant@juno.com)

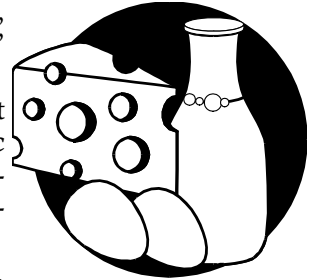
Would you eat food that has gone bad and smells of decomposition? Would you eat food that is left around until mold, microbes, and maggots have had a chance at it? Would you eat food that is spoiled and rotten?

Don't say no, because not only would you, you do and have relished it.

Occasionally the milk in my refrigerator turns sour. What do I do? Throw it out? No, I put it on my counter and wait a few days until it curdles. Then I strain it to remove the whey, and I have cottage cheese. Spoiled milk. All cheeses are spoiled milk, albeit in more controlled conditions than I provide. So are sour cream, yogurt, and buttermilk.

Milk sours primarily because of the action of lactic acid bacteria, often including *Streptococcus lactis*, from the same family of germs that give you a strep throat, and *Lactobacilli*. Depending upon the particular lactic acid bacteria used, simple sour cream, yogurt, and buttermilk are produced. Draining and condensing gets us the fresh cheeses, *i.e.*, cream cheese, Quark, cottage cheese, farmers' cheese, *etc.*

A more developed cheese occurs when rennet is added to the soured milk. Sometimes propionic acid bacteria are added. These bacteria release carbon dioxide to form the holes in Gruyere and similar cheeses.



As a final step, a mold is often brushed on, sprayed on, or punched into the ripening cheese. Mold is a fungus. Camembert has *Penicillium camemberti* sprayed on it. Similar molds are sprayed on other soft ripening cheeses such as Brie and Explorateur. The mold is seen as the white "bloom" on the outside of the cheese. *Penicillium roqueforti* is inoculated into wheels of Roquefort. Other similar molds are used for other blue cheeses; Stilton, Gorgonzola, and Cambozola. A cut of a blue cheese will show straight blue or green lines where the inoculating needles penetrated the wheel.

Real cheese aficionados may go one step further. The cheese is not considered fully ripe unless it contains maggots or mites. When I was in the army, we would receive "care" packages from home. It was customary to share all packages with our buddies. One day, an Italian-American received a package that contained a block of cheese. He passed it around until someone noted "there's something moving around in this cheese." Sure enough there were tiny, white "some things" moving around. The package recipient explained "They're nothing. They are part of the cheese." He and I were the only ones that enjoyed the cheese. That was my first encounter with cheese maggots (*Piophilha casei*).

Cheese mites (*Tyroglyphus siro*) are individually invisible to the naked eye, but congregations of them look like dust. They appear on the surface of some old and treasured Stiltons.

My mother used to make wine by filling a gallon jug with raisins, sugar, and water. A loose stopper was put on and it was left in a dark closet for a while. The result was a sweet and heady wine.

Wine and beer and their derivatives, brandy, whiskey, vodka, and gin are fermented plant products. The sugars are converted to alcohol and carbon dioxide by a fungus or yeast that appears in the air everywhere, as in my mother's wine. Commercial wines and serious amateurs use specially cultivated yeasts to produce their wine or beer.



Spoiled fruit. As the grains used to make beer do not contain a significant amount of sugar, the grains are first sprouted to create a malt in which some of the starch is converted to sugar. Bread is also a result of a fermentation process utilizing airborne or selected fungi to rot the sugars. Sourdough bread is often made with wild airborne yeasts. San Francisco sourdough gets its distinctive flavor from the wild yeasts peculiar to the Bay Area.



Most of us prefer the taste of aged beef. Today, most beef is aged from seven to ten days. When I lived in New York, there were several steak houses located near the wholesale meat market. In each of these steak houses there was a large refrigerated meat locker in which hung sides and sections of beef. The interior of the meat locker was visible to the steak house patrons because one wall was glass and accessible to all who entered. The patrons could view the hanging beef and select from which side or section they wanted their steaks cut. Some of the meat hanging in the meat locker was covered with a green mold, aging far longer than a week or two. This was the best and oldest aged beef, also the most expensive. In addition to mold, pleuromana and lactobacilli bacteria contribute to the aging process of beef.

In addition to beef, most game improves in flavor with aging. But not all people or cultures prefer that improvement. Aged beef has a musty or gamey flavor to them. In James Clavell's novel, *Shogun*, an incident is described where the American hangs some birds to age, but this seriously offends the Japanese.

Pickles are essentially fermented vegetables (cucumbers), fish (herring), or meat (corned beef). The pickle is a product of lactic acid-producing bacterial action.

In other words, spoiled food.



**A View
from the Right:
Dick the Butcher
was Right! Part II:
Un“Civil” Law**

by

J. T. Moran

(morwood@cfl.rr.com)

Although “Criminal” lawyers may make the headlines with cases like those I noted last month, the far greater danger to American prosperity is not (contrary to all the claims of the Liberals) rogue CEOs, but is the epidemic of “Civil” litigation in the form of corporate liability lawsuits.

One of the biggest, and earliest of the liability decisions was the McDonald’s case, the one where the woman bought a piping hot cup of coffee (which is the way it is supposed to be) and then placed it between her legs as she rode away, eventually causing it to erupt like a geyser when she squeezed it with her thighs. She sued, saying it was too hot. Instead of being laughed out of court for blatant stupidity with the fervent hope that she never pass on her genes, the jury instead awarded this nitwit \$6 million. She should not have received a dime.

In another case a man bought a new Volvo. When he noticed an irregularity in the paint he took it to his mechanic who told him the car had been repaired. Now, having seen numerous vehicles of all makes coming into repair shops for minor finish repairs from damage in transit, this does not surprise me. The gentleman sued Volvo for the difference in new and repaired value. And won. Volvo was ordered to pay \$5,000 for the difference... and \$20 million more the jury decided Volvo should pay in punitive damages for not disclosing the repairs.

In 1998 a federal judge, responding to a lawsuit on behalf of four women (only one of whom actually filled out a job application) ruled that Joe’s Stone Crab restaurant in Miami Beach was guilty of sex discrimination. The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals erased damages awarded in 1998 to two women but upheld the damages awarded to another woman and ordered Judge Daniel T.K. Hurley to recalculate the damages awarded to a fourth woman. Where this case got even more ridiculous was the appeals court finding that the two women for whom the court awarded damages were only “interested” in applying for server jobs at Joe’s during 1990. Not were refused jobs, or even applied for jobs... just were interested. And even though the court failed to identify any discriminatory hiring practices, it still found the restaurant guilty of discrimination. Joe’s owner, a woman, has spent over \$1 million defending this case, against the bottomless pockets of the feds.

And then, of course, there was Tobacco – the El Dorado of lawyers. The makers of a perfectly legal product were forced to pay out \$284 billion dollars to the state governments in what was little more than a case of extortion on a scale that would make the Godfather die from envy. The industry, rather than take the risk of jury trials, settled with the various governments, sometimes with very good reason. Several states made deals with trial lawyers, throwing out legal precedent and applying new laws retroactively in order to ensure a win against the tobacco companies. Mary-

land legislators, for example, rewrote the law after the state filed a lawsuit against the tobacco companies. The changes in the law were designed to guarantee Maryland victory. And in 1994, the state of Florida went so far as to change the law to prohibit defendants from presenting certain evidence and legal arguments, making it all but impossible to defend themselves. For the tobacco case, Florida required that defendants post a bond of 150 percent of the lower court judgment before they could appeal. The bond amount was so cost prohibitive that the right to an appeal was effectively denied.

Greed is ugly, but when those who make the laws rig the game so they can't lose, it is more than ugly: it is hideous.

Since tobacco, the same tactics have been tried on the firearm industry. However, here the industry has fought back and won on appeal the very few cases it lost.

But more such "class actions" loom on the horizon. Using the same tactics and logic, "fast food" has been sued, claiming it caused obesity. When that area is wrung dry, you can bet alcohol will be sued for causing drunk drivers, and the auto industry quite possibly as well for making it possible for the drunks to drive.

One thing is certain, these lawsuits and the hundreds and thousands like them cost everyone in the end. Where it hurts the most, in OUR pockets. And in our lives.

Because it is not only the prosperity of America that is threatened by the cupidity of lawyers and the stupidity of juries; our health is rapidly being jeopardized by the ambulance-chasing extortionists.

In just the recent weeks and months, we have seen and read about medical specialists, such as pediatricians, obstetrician/gynecologists, and neurosurgeons, closing their offices and refusing to treat patients. We have seen hospital emergency rooms shuttered because they cannot get doctors to work in them. We are seeing the very well-being of our country being placed in peril. Why is this happening?

Litigation, that's why. The number of malpractice lawsuits being filed has skyrocketed, thereby causing malpractice insurance rates to climb like the Space Shuttle going into orbit. For the specialties mentioned above, the rates have, or are about to, double and even triple. In some cases, the cost of insurance will run well in excess of \$100,000 per year! And it is not restricted to the specialists. I happen to know that even my family physician, a general practitioner, will pay over \$40,000 this year for insurance.

The costs of lawsuits are just like any other expense for a business. They wind up being paid for by the end user: we the people. Tax increases, insurance increases, material cost increases, and litigation costs... all do the same thing. And that is eventually cost the consumer... and not only in money.

Perhaps it is time to consider the demand of Dick the Butcher. Oh, not familiar with the gentleman? Well, he is the individual who, in William Shakespeare's *Henry VI: Part 2, act iv: scene ii*, shouted the immortal words:

“First thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers.”

As any good professor of literature will tell you, in the Bard’s day, lawyers were looked upon as a stabilizing force for society. But, today...?

It begins to look more and more like sage advice. For it is obvious that they will not control themselves, nor their avarice.

Somehow, we must. For ourselves, and our posterity. The way is through tort reform, and a return to the common-sense concept of personal responsibility.

Create a review panel comprised of retired judges who will do nothing except review lawsuits for legal and constitutional merit and will have the ability to refuse them if they fail to pass muster. Get the emotion of the jury box out of the lawsuit.

Enact maximum caps for jury awards, especially those for “punitive damages”. Not for medical expenses or other actual losses. They should be covered completely, and for true current and future losses due to incapacitation. But stop “punishing” the deep pockets for being successful.

For example, in late September of this year a jury awarded a life-long smoker damages against a tobacco company. Notwithstanding that his family and his doctor had been trying to get him to quit for years; notwithstanding the graphic warnings from the Surgeon General and the dire warnings on cigarette packs, he continued smoking until he developed lung cancer. So of course he sued the tobacco industry. And, to paraphrase Dicken’s Mr. Bumble, “the jury is an ass”. Because, it awarded this weak-willed individual \$500,000 for actual damages, and \$100,000 for pain and suffering. Reasonable amounts, perhaps even a little low if you take into account medical costs. But it also awarded this jackass \$28 BILLION in “punitive damages”! How in the name of God did they come up with a figure like that? Especially considering the tobacco industry has already had \$246 billion extorted from it by the states. For selling a legal product.

Enact a “cap” on how much a lawyer can receive for “contingency” fees.

Normal contingency fees run about 30% of the final judgment. So the lawyers for the cigarette addict above stand to gain almost \$9 Billion dollars if the jury award stands. I’d call those kinds of results pretty good incentive for an honest lawyer to turn ambulance-chaser.

Loser pays. Both the litigant, AND his lawyer. They pay the other guy’s legal fees, and triple the amount he was sued for. Payment will be in direct proportion to the average taxable income reported by the litigant and the attorney in the prior three years.

No more “deep pockets”. Those responsible will be the only ones at risk.

I think these reforms are reasonable. They do not prohibit lawsuits, nor legal action for true liability. And, although the liberals and the lawyers may not like them, let them consider Dick’s alternative.

Because if they don’t change, others might consider it instead.



My Point of View

Some Campaign Promises You Will Never Hear

by

Mike Moakley

As Election 2002 draws near, and the various political campaigns are now reaching a crescendo, I thought it would be appropriate to look at some campaign promises many of our state candidates are making. For example, consider all the ads now dominating our airwaves addressing the sorry state of our school system as the candidates attempt to characterize themselves as being the “Education _____ (you fill in the blank)”.

But, rather than review the slick sound-bite ads where neither side really says anything of substance, I will bring to you some examples of the *real promises* our candidates make, not the ones meant for our eyes and ears.

To put this in its proper perspective, I must state here and now that as voters, we do not really matter to the candidates seeking our vote. For those who would take issue with this, I pose this question: When was the last time you voted for someone because you really believed the candidate was the right person for the job, as opposed to “the lesser of two evils”? No, the real deciding factor on determining who *runs*, let alone *wins*, is the money available to finance the candidates’ campaigns.

In the Year 2000 election cycle, approximately \$50 million was spent financing campaigns for Florida state offices. Of that, nearly half, some \$22.1 million came from business contributions. This does NOT count contributions from individuals who are in some way connected with those businesses, nor does this account for “soft money”. It would appear, then, a candidate, if he or she seriously expects to win the election, must have the sponsorship of the business “community”.

Business, by its very nature, does not exist to waste its money. In order for a business to be successful, it must be certain it will have a profitable return on its investments. Any political contribution, whatever its form, is regarded as an investment. Thus, the business “community” certainly demands a profitable return on its political investment in any given candidate.

Candidates, then, must make the real promises to their business sponsors. Now for just a few examples of the *real* promises:

Let’s start with “protecting” the ENVIRONMENT (Gasp!):

“When elected, I will ensure the TAXPAYERS pay for businesses to comply with our environmental laws.” **(Item #42)**

“When elected, I will sponsor legislation to allow you to conceal your violations (if you correct them quickly enough).” **(Item #54)**

Now, let’s move to LABOR “RELATIONS” (?):

“When elected, I will continue our fine Florida tradition of guaranteeing business the right to fire any employee without requiring any reason to do so.” **(Items #70 – 72)**

“When elected, I will introduce legislation to assist employers in identifying ‘troublemakers’ before they file any discrimination complaints.” **(Item #73)**

Last, but not least, WORKERS' COMPENSATION (Ouch!!):

"When elected, I will introduce legislation to force Florida's WORKERS (**That's taxpayers**) to pay the Workers' Comp premiums, instead of the current system of charging the premiums to employers." (**Item #136**)

"When elected, I will introduce legislation to ensure employees can't sue their bosses for any injury...unless the employee can PROVE his boss deliberately tried to hurt him." (**Item #142**)

A word of explanation is necessary here about the examples I have given above. Florida Business United, the political arm of Associated Industries of Florida (claiming its members contributed over \$10 million in the 2000 state races), sends a "Candidate Questionnaire" containing some 146 items to all announced candidates for state office. My examples, then, are derived from that document. The Item numbers cited refer to the specific questions in the Questionnaire. Interestingly enough, the Questionnaire asked no questions concerning Florida's schools of our "Education Candidates".

Would YOU vote for such a candidate who would make promises similar to the ones in my small example? Chances are the candidates you support may have already made those promises.



The 10th Story

by

Elissa Rudolph,

RVC10

RVC10@us.mensa.org

November always seems the darkest month to me with only Thanksgiving to light it up. Without dark, however, how would we determine light? I think going to the Keys for the Mini RG that the Miami group organizes every year might be a way to keep a nice balance between light and dark. See you there?

A couple of items to surface from the recent AMC meeting in Lincoln, NE: The Bootstrap Committee, a nationally appointed group, is there for your group. Should you get into a pickle financially this committee can help. There are extra funds to assist a group in getting (or saving) a certain postal rate, for instance. A group needs only to present their case and the Bootstrappers will jump in. Contact me for more info. There will be a change in the GOTYA (Group of the Year Award) program that will make it less competitive and more achievement-oriented. The change will take place with the next go-round. If your group is currently amassing points, continue to do so! New rules are for the 2003-2004 program.

Coming Events:

November 8-10, *Mini-Gathering in the Middle Keys*, Lime Tree Bay Resort, Long Key, MM 68.5, 305-664-4740. Call or email Hank Harris, 305-945-5543, **ha3nk@bellsouth.net**

January 31-February 2, *Smarti Gras 2003*, <http://www.centralflorida.us.mensa.org/> *Laissez les bons mots rouler!* Plan now to attend this RG organized by Central Florida Mensa!



Nov. 8-10, Veteran's Day weekend, the fabulous **Middle Keys MINI-GATHERING**

WHERE?

LIME TREE BAY Resort on Long Key, about 55 miles south of Florida City, on US 1, gulfside (MM 68.5, north of Marathon). Call **Lime Tree Bay Resort**: In the Keys, (305) 664-4740; from elsewhere, (800) 723-4519; or write them: P.O.B. 839, Layton, Long Key, FL 33001 to make your reservation. **Mention Mensa** for discount

What is there to do?

The resort is located at about the **center of the Keys**, so the ambitious can spend a day exploring Key West. Or reading, relaxing, or plenty of nothin'!

At the motel itself: **Swimming pool. Jacuzzi. Shuffleboard, tennis, horseshoes, sandy beach.** At night, you can see wonderful stars. You can also rent many means of aquatic conveyance from **wave runners, powerboats and glass-bottom boats to Hobie Cats!** **Fishing, snorkeling, diving trips and sunset cruises** can also be arranged. Ask when you make your reservation.

MEALS?

We'll all get together for **dinner Friday night at Little Italy** and then repair to the hot tub, pool or just chat. Wanna sleep instead? Fine by us.

We expect to have a **steak/chicken cookout Saturday night** (weather permitting) with all the fixings. If we're rained out, we have a Plan B. The hospitality suite is open all day, from 7 am. Start your day with chat, coffee, juice, danish, bagels, steak tartare. Okay, scratch the steak.

PRICES, INCLUDING Mensa's special DISCOUNT: Rooms (queen or king) \$57.60; Deluxe suites, 2 queen beds upstairs, \$87.20; Studios, king or queen plus sofa, kitchen, etc. \$79.20. More deluxe options – see their website.

QUESTIONS? Visit their website to peek at the million-dollar remodeling: limetreebayresort.com

Contact chairman Hank Harris: (305)945-5543 (ha3nk@bellsouth.net) for questions.

AS SOON AS YOU'VE MADE YOUR RESERVATIONS, let us know! Clip, fill out, write a check, and send it to: Hank Harris, 51 NW 161 ST, Miami, FL 33169

NAME _____ **phone** _____

No. in party _____

Will arrive Friday p.m. ___ Saturday ___ I (we) **WILL** ___ **WILL NOT** ___ join you for Friday night dinner.

I enclose \$16 each for ___ Saturday cookout meals. I (we) prefer **STEAK** ___ **CHICKEN** ___

I enclose \$10 each for ___ registrations. Registration includes two continental breakfasts and snacks.



Central Florida Mensa

presents

"Smarti Gras"

January 31st - February 2nd, 2003

Holiday Inn Select
12125 High Tech Ave.
Orlando, FL 32817
(407) 275-9000
<http://www.hiucf.com>

All Rooms \$72.00

(rate and availability guaranteed until Jan. 10)

"Laissez les bons mots rouler!"

All Mensans are welcome to return to a taste of New Orleans, right here in the Central Florida sunshine. Smarti Gras was so popular last year that we decided to continue the party. Our Hotel is preparing the Giant hot tub for our late night use, and our hospitality is always the best. Meals are provided in your registration, except for the Saturday dinner on the town. Ask your friends that attended Smarti Gras if it wasn't the best party in town.

We are sorry to report that the Alien Booby toss will not occur due to expiration of the alien's visa. We are planning something as strange for your enjoyment, but we'll never tell. The Hotel is fully accessible by those with limited mobility. All events and hospitality are on the same floor, so come on to Orlando in January to celebrate Smarti Gras!

Registrations:

\$65 through Oct 20, 2002
\$70 Oct 21 through Jan 1, 2003
\$75 Jan 2 and afterwards

Send Registrations to:

Eddie Truelove
3333 Honeysuckle Lane
Belle Isle, FL 32812
407.855.9078
etruelove@cfl.rr.com

Name _____

Address _____

City, St, Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

**Double
Takes**



by
**Anne
Nonymuss**

Here's a quiz to while away a few minutes of your time. It will require vocabulary skills and the ability to anagram words.

For each pair of definitions, you are to find one word which can be anagrammed to fit both definitions.

Example: to discontinue - round, fairly deep containers. STOP means to discontinue and POTS are round, fairly deep containers; STOP and POTS are anagrams.

Got the idea? Now try these...

1. To condescend - to intend
2. Relatives - cuttlefish secretion
3. To color with a red cosmetic - to free from weeds or diseased plants
4. To work for - poetry
5. Makes ready - a silly smile

(Answers will be found below)



Arachnae's Threads
by
**Clara Woodall-Moran,
Webmaster**

The web is still plugging along. We have the ARG flyer for Central Florida posted. Check it out and sign up for it. We are still working on the permanent site and making all of the things work as they should.

Some may ask why we still send out a printed issue of the newsletter when it is online as soon as it hard copy is delivered to the Post Office for mailing. The rules are pretty clear that at least one copy will be sent to each member's household. That is in the Bylaws...not all of our members have Internet Access to get the newsletter online so we still have to mail it.

If you have trouble looking at the CFM RG Flyer, for instance it appears as an all black screen, your version of Acrobat Reader may need to be updated. The best thing to do if the black screen appears is save the Flyer to your hard drive and open the file from there as there can also be a conflict with the browser used.

Happy computing!

Phone: (407) 631-3548 FAX: (407) 690-2295

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We Have....



The Answers!

1. *designs - design*
2. *ink - kin*
3. *rouge - rogue*
4. *serve - verse*
5. *primes - simper*