

*The*

# SCAM

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*2002 Newsletter Owl Nominee*

**BIG VOTING ISSUE!**



**YOUR BALLOT IS INSIDE!**

Volume 21, No. 5

May, 2003

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*The  
Newsletter*  
**SCAM**  
page coast area mensa

**Editor** J.T. Moran  
**Assembly/Circulation** Helen Lee Moore  
**Events Coordinator** *Volunteer Needed!*  
**Cover Artist** *Artisté Needed!*  
**Proofreader** Thea Saurus

We will appreciate your submissions legibly handwritten, typed, in e-mail text, or on 3.5 disk in IBM text or word-processing format. We can receive your submissions by mail at: **P.O. Box 457, Sharpes FL 32959**, or submit via e-mail to: **SCAM@cfl.rr.com**

Subscription — \$10.00 for 12 issues.

### *Happy May Birthday*

02 – Jean Marshall	19 – Samuel Beckett
02 – James Pickett	19 – Kate Johannsen
03 – Brian Conway	20 – Robert Gray
04 – Adele Dace	23 – Harold Crawford
06 – Barry Ebert	23 – Kenneth Dimond
07 – Kenneth Kline	25 – Aimee Bergquist
09 – Douglas Raugh	25 – William Neill
12 – John McKeown	25 – James Stewart
12 – Martin Vanoy	27 – Karen Freiberg
17 – Douglas Dial	29 – Donna Crowder
17 – Nicole Smith	30 – Francis Stump
18 – Donald Elmore	



*Mea Culpa!* - Through no fault of her own, SCAM's Beth Caswell's birthday of April 3rd was not listed last month. Unfortunately, this does not mean she is not a year older.

### *Welcome to SCAM and Mensa*

*Abbey Thompson – Rockledge*  
*Eric Thompson – Rockledge*

### *Welcome to SCAM*

*Allison Mautz – Satellite Beach*



**On the  
Firing Line**



**J.T. Moran**

**SCAM Editor**

**A**s my time as Editor draws to a close, I am pleased to announce that continuity has been assured.

Although the final acceptance of any volunteer is up to the ExComm that you will be voting for with the ballot contained in this issue, I feel safe in saying that our group will not have to settle for a generic newsletter, put together by the ExComm as a whole, which is all that can be done without an Editor.

However, nothing is set in stone. Anyone who wishes to throw their hat in the ring needs but contact a member of the current ExComm, or show up at the turnover meeting in June for the seating of the new ExComm. This goes for all appointed positions. SCAM is always in need of volunteers for committees that meet as often as monthly, to as infrequently as once a year.

On a related note, please take notice of the fact that James Dace is no longer listed on the ballot. For personal reasons he advised the ExComm and NomElComm that he had to withdraw his name from consideration. As he did it in time, his name was removed from the ballot. We thank him and hope that everything works out well.



**Mewsing About**



**Clara**

**Woodall-Moran,  
LocSec**

**I**t is election time already... seems like just a year ago we did this. Last year only 25 of the 200 members determined who would run the ExComm... if you want your voice heard, return your ballot to the Nominations and Elections committee by the appropriate time, properly filled out and properly enveloped (remember the unmarked inside envelope, containing only one ballot, both inside an exterior envelope with your member number included in the return address in the upper left corner or on the back of the envelop). Let your voice be heard this year.

We are in desperate need of some volunteers. If you have web access, please look over the "volunteer" positions and see where you can help out our fine organization. If you do not have web access, write to me for a copy of the Members Handbook. I'll be glad to send you one.

I'd really like to see some attendance at the June ExComm meeting. This is the turnover meeting and I think we need to start doing this with bit more flare and pageantry. Let the old and new officers feel they are appreciated for their hard work. The ExComm tends to work in a vacuum, never knowing how the membership really feels. We'll try to think of some place really nice to hold the event.



***Minutes of the  
ExComm Meeting***



The ExComm met at the home of Helen Lee Moore on April 6, 2003.

Call to Order 16:03

Members present: **Clara Woodall-Moran, Rita Johnson-Aronna, Joe Smith, and Helen Lee Moore.**

Welcome guests: Pat Aronna

Previous minutes approved *unanimously*.

**Correspondence** - Jim Dace; Bob Tuck – both held to

be used in reports.

**Officer Reports**

**LocSec, Asst. LocSec, Member-At-Large:** No Report

**RecSec:** Position Vacant

**Treasurer:** Report given.

**Committee Reports**

**Audit; Bylaws:** No Report.

**Editor/Web:** Two inquiries for the editorship and it should be a smooth transition. **Web:** we now have single email address for the group - see the Web column on page 27.

**Membership:** Currently 231 but expect a sharp fall when the dues expire

**NomElCom:** Jim Dace's withdrawal from the election – family issues.

Ballot will show only 4 names

**Publicity:** Emailed report about Wal-Mart's Reading Day – looking for volunteers; Also: Fox TV's Test America Day. Joe to work with Bob and with Clara to see if a team can be assembled to possibly compete.

**Scholarship:** Clara requested the ExComm handle our scholarship so we will present one this year. Rita volunteered to be Pro-tem chair of this committee. The ExComm will help with reading the essays, etc.

**SIGHT:** Helping as the requests come in – Ike Kuhlman will be staying with the Morans' on his way to the LDW in Ft. Lauderdale this month

**SIG:** Putting a new SIG event on the calendar at the Roxy Theater in Melbourne -- \$1.00 tickets for afternoon shows.

**Testing:** A bit of a slowdown in this process – some inquiries / no shows

**Old Business** - Form for Document Control – template approved. First standing rule using the format is the standing rule to use the form for all new rules and guidelines enacted. Membership handbook getting professional assistance from the Editor.

**New business:** Present standing rule for using template

**Open Forum, Announcements:** None

**Next meeting:** Helen's at 4:00PM , April 27<sup>th</sup>.

Motion to adjourn: Joe *moved*, Helen *second*, vote *unanimous*: 16:40



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



**Ken Thornton-Smith**

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**The Wabasso Triangle: Episode 22  
The Catch**

It should not have happened, but only one thing is certain: it did happen. Defying the Laws of Physics and Gated Community overhanging fruit covenants, not forgetting the Handicapped parking signs at Sebastian Inlet, the Wabasso Triangle has struck again. Here's another high-calorie serving of pasta puerility from the durum delinquent.

Anthony Chianti, Licensed Private Eye and Indian River Community Pasta Detective, reporting:

It was Tuesday, last Tuesday, and Australia had won the Cricket World Cup. Switzerland had already won the America's Cup, and in the New World Order, America could only command a paltry sixth place. International news is always depressing – that's why I try to keep in touch by reading *The Noodle Enquirer*:

"From his archeological dig in the great rift valley of Micco, Florida, Dr. Perry Stroika today made an announcement that is pushing back the boundaries of civilized man:

"Ve are finding here a remarkable new find. Ze oldest finding zat ve haf found. Ve are naming ze find *Australopasticus Malabarensis*."

"Dr Stroika's discovery means we now have a firm date for noodle use during the Late Pastocene. That's right, early man was making and eating pasta over 2 million years ago. Unfortunately, all the samples recovered were overcooked, and the sauce is terrible..."

See what I mean? These wackos don't live in the real world. Depressing – that's why I read the *Wabasso Herald*. At least it has a crossword. Somewhere here. Except – where's it gone? The crossword page has disappeared!

Something was wrong somewhere, and for once it wasn't Detective Inspector "Raving" Ravioli of the Serious Pasta Crimes Squad treading on my toes and curling my hair by exhaling his weapons-of-mass-destruction-grade breath in the same zip code. Fortunately, this gave me time to think. But still the nagging question remained: 22 Across. The catch is – there isn't one.

But what's this? Singles Scene? They've replaced the puzzles with a new introductory service.

The idea was simple enough – someone calls in their details, the paper



prints them, and someone else, namely moi, calls the lonely little chickadee and from then on we let nature take its course.

There is a remote possibility of the little chickadee turning into an ugly pterodactyl, like my ex-wife, Princess Brain Damage. But it's worth the risk.

The crossword forgotten, I cut the page up into little slips of paper and arranged them on the dining table in a complex decision-making matrix. It took a couple of hours with a pair of scissors and another hour of increasingly futile phone calls, but then I came across "Looking for Pasta in Palm Bay". Soon, we were due to meet in that expensive French Restaurant in Melbourne, L'Oignon Perfide.

I put on my best T-shirt as this was the first blind date for a few years. Just as well – these days I look so haggard people probably think my first name is Merle.

I was nervous on my way to the restaurant, and even my trusty 1976 Buick Testudo was spluttering and banging. Perhaps it's time for a replacement. I like the look of the new Silverado, but the way things are at the moment I couldn't afford a Bronzerado.

On the other hand, maybe it's time to repair the old Cadillac Eldorito that's up on cinder blocks in the yard. The engine is still good, but the brown lace trimmed bodywork wouldn't win any prizes on The Young and The Rustless.

Heading north, the traffic was terrible as the Spring Breakers mingled with the last of the snowbirds. I never understood Canadians – their tags say they're going "On ta Rio", so how come they stop when they get to Florida?

The volume control solved the problem of the engine noise as I sat back and tried to relax to Kilometers Davis, the metric jazz trumpeter. This was from the "Live at Birdland" album, the set with The Loneliest Monk. Great recording – I could hear the parrots in the background.

As I drew up outside the restaurant it occurred to me – that's strange, why would a pasta lover pick a French restaurant? Inside, the current nominee for the next Mrs. Chianti was waiting patiently in the lobby. She reached out a delicate hand, "Hi, I'm Holly, nice to meet you."

They seated us in a quiet corner table by the window and we made polite conversation until the wine waiter arrived. I immediately took control and scanned the list, eager to impress:

"How about a Pinot Grigio – that would work."

"Mais yes – today we 'ave une Chateau



Bongwater, the soixante-neuf.”

“Sixty-nine?”

“Oui – it was a good year for Bongwater. Thirty-three bucks a pop - ze best we ‘ave.”

“Thirty-three bucks?” I gulped. I’m not cheap, but I am on special this week.

I nodded and he left us alone. At last it was time to get to know each other:

“So, Holly, have you... er... ever been married?”

“Just the once – he was nice enough but, as they say, he didn’t come with much bundled software...”

“Know exactly what you mean...”

“... so it was a relief to get back to my real last name... Fourbarrel, Holly Fourbarrel. Yourself?”

“Me too. Well, apart from the name change thing... married just the once.”

“And you, Anthony – what church are you with?”

Church?

With?

Me?

Phew – this is a tough one. You know me – not enough faith to be an atheist. I could make something up, or maybe it’s best to be honest and tell her that the last time I went to church was my own baptism:



“Er... I’m not actually with a church, Holly.”

“You’re not? Are you a sort of freelance, a peripatetic preacher, then?”

“Er... no, I’m not any sort of preacher...”

“You’re not a preacher?”

“Not that I’m aware, no.”

“Then how come you’re a Pastor? Remember the ad – ‘Looking for Pastor in Palm Bay’...?”

“Pastor?” I swallowed, “Er... not pasta, then?”

“Don’t be silly,” she laughed, “Pasta, yuk – I hate the stuff...”

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: The Wabasso Triangle had struck again!

Well, 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.  
*Bed 22, Mental Health Ward, Indian River Memorial Hospital.*



## Your Health



### Bunions

**Ann Schindler**

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**B**allux valgus is the medical term for bunions, a common deformity of the metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint, the joint at the base of the big toe. It is claimed that the word “bunion” comes from a Latin or Greek word for turnip, a French word for onion, and a Latin word for enlargement. Whichever is correct, bunions are no fun and they can be very painful. Bunions form when the MTP joint moves out of place (subluxation), usually from pronation of the foot, forcing the big toe to bend inward toward the others. Pronation occurs when the foot is rotated inward so that

the weight comes down on the inner margin of the foot. Another type of bunion is the bunionette, or tailor’s bunion, found on the other side of the foot, causing the joint to swell outward and the little toe to slant inward. Bunions may occur on one or both feet, usually are very painful, and result in a wide diameter foot that is difficult to fit with a comfortable shoe.

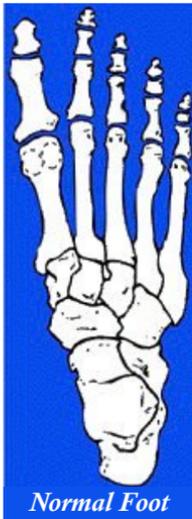
Heredity is a major factor in developing bunions because we inherit a foot type. Flat feet, abnormal ligaments of the foot, and bone or joint deformities all contribute to developing bunions, as does arthritis. There are, however, many things we do to aggravate bunions. Bunions are found mostly in women, primarily because of ill-fitting pointed toe shoes or high-heels. These shoes squeeze the toes and exert pressure on them, causing changes in alignment of the bones. High heels cause the body weight to be supported on a very small area of the foot, exerting a large force on the joints at the front of the foot, likewise resulting in alignment changes.



**Tailor's Bunion**

Bunions are classified as mild, moderate, or severe, depending on the amount of angle of the foot bones (metatarsals) and the bones of the big toe (proximal and distal phalanx). The angle of the big toe may be so severe that it laps over or under the second toe. There may be swelling, redness, and pain at the MTP joint along with limitation in movement. Calluses may develop from the rubbing of the MTP joint on the side of the shoe. Hammertoes (bending downward in a clawlike fashion) can develop in the other toes along with corns and calluses. Ingrown toenails may also develop.

Treatment is aimed at alleviating pain and preventing progression of the deformity. A podiatrist can be consulted to help devise a treatment plan. Pain medications and anti-inflammatory drugs help relieve discomfort and swelling. Special shoe inserts called orthotics can be made specifically for the patient’s foot. These are designed to correct abnormalities in foot mechanics and put the foot into a correct position. Choose shoes that

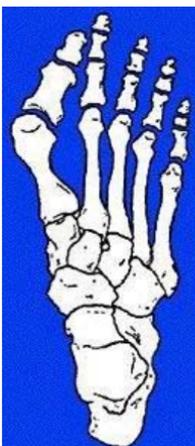


*Normal Foot*

are supportive, wide enough, and have flat or low heels. There are various bunion and foot devices designed to aid in comfort. These include bunion pads, shields, and alignment devices as bunion splints. Physical therapy or ultrasound treatments may help relieve discomfort and stiffness. Elevating the foot and applying ice to the bunion for 10 to 15 minutes each hour frequently helps. Remember to never let ice remain on any body part continuously as there is great danger in affecting circulation and permanent damage can result.

If these methods do not help to relieve the discomfort of the bunions, surgery may become necessary. Luckily we have progressed beyond the days when the routine surgical treatment for bunions was amputation of the big toe. There are various types of bunion surgery depending on the amount of correction needed and your particular health needs. No surgery is without risks. It is possible that you may develop problems as a result of the surgery including infection, numbness in part of the foot, persistent or intractable (unmanageable) pain, or you may even develop another bunion at the same joint in the future. Most people who have bunion surgery, however, are happy with the results and have no further problems. The simplest surgery involves removal of the protruding part of the metatarsal bone, called an exostectomy. This type of surgery is rarely done as it does not correct the cause of the bunion. Most bunions require a more extensive procedure that may include one or more of the following options: cutting and realigning the bone and joint, insertion of a screw to hold the joint in place, realigning the ligaments and other tissues, fusion of the MTP joint, or implanting an artificial joint. Walking may be limited for several days after surgery, and a special shoe or brace may be worn for about six weeks, until healing is complete. Only one foot is operated on at a time to allow the patient some mobility. It is frequently suggested after surgery that the patient be fitted with an orthotic device for the shoe so that the foot will maintain proper alignment and the bunion will be less likely to recur.

It is important to wear a properly fitting shoe. In the 1930's to 1950's we had shoe-fitting x-ray machines in most shoe stores to help us in purchasing shoes. The customer tried on a pair of shoes and placed his feet into the opening at the bottom of the machine. The machine would show the image of the feet and an outline of the shoe. There were viewing ports for the customer, the salesperson, and a third person, to view fit. A picture of this device is available at [www.ora.com/ptp/collection/](http://www.ora.com/ptp/collection/)



*Bunion Foot*

*shoefittingfluor/shoe.htm*. Since these devices were banished in most states by 1970, we must rely on other methods to purchase the correct size shoe. One foot is frequently larger than the other, so be sure to have both feet measured. Do not assume that all manufacturers of shoes produce a standard size shoe. Not all size 8 shoes are the same, for instance, anymore than all size 10 dresses or all size 32 pants are the same. Try them on and walk in them preferably at the end of the day when the feet have expanded to their largest size. Our feet have to support us for many years. It is important to treat them well.

## Sources

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### ***My Point of View***

### ***Watch Out For The Predators!***

by

***Mike Moakley***

Now that Tax Season has drawn to a close, let us focus our attention on yet another season: Open Season on Consumers. Here, I will focus on predatory lending practices, an ever-growing problem as the real income of working Americans continue to decline and the need for credit, almost at any cost, continues to mushroom as Americans struggle more and more to make ends meet. It is estimated that some 40 percent of us who rely on credit are considered to have some problem paying our bills. Of course, owing to deregulation of business and the “entrepreneurial spirit” encouraged by our politicians in recent years, the miseries of those with credit problems give rise to some unique business opportunities, better know by some as the “Poverty Industry”. I will describe a few examples here, as space does not permit a comprehensive listing. All of these practices, here in Florida, are legal.

First, let’s examine **Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs)**. During the early part of Tax Season, you were no doubt inundated with TV ads promising “Instant Refunds”, offered by chain tax services and some check cashing businesses. A typical RAL involves filing the tax return electronically for a fee averaging \$75, and having the customer apply for the loan. The customer is charged an “application fee” of about \$40 and a loan fee of about 4% of the refund. All these fees are deducted from the amount of the tax refund with the customer receiving a cashier’s check for the remainder. For example, a customer is entitled to a tax refund of \$3000. Deducted are \$120 (4% of the refund) + \$40 + \$75, totaling \$235, yielding the customer \$2765. The effective annual interest rate for this example is **214 percent!**

Not bad for less than 30 minutes' work! Even so, the tax preparation fee is not part of the finance charge.

Next on my list, **Payday Loans**, where the customer provides the lender a post-dated check and receives less cash than the face amount of the loan. The check is then held until the customer's payday, at which time the customer redeems the check by paying the face amount, allows the check to be cashed, or writes another postdated check and pays another fee (as he often cannot repay the loan). The average annual interest on these loans is estimated at about 485%. To aggravate the problem, many payday lenders routinely file criminal charges when, as he already anticipated, a customer's check bounces. In Florida, the penalty for a bounced check can be up to three times the face value of the check (in addition to fines, bank fees, and probation supervision charges). Let us suppose our customer issues a check for \$500, and receives \$475. His check bounces, and the lender prosecutes him. He now owes the lender \$1500 (not counting the bank and legal fees). In this example, the effective annual interest rate is more like **16,961%**! Moreover, if these charges are not paid, the customer could well be thrown in jail (and you thought we did not have any debtors' prisons).

Even if you're NOT living below the poverty line, you may still fall victim to predatory lenders. One example is the **Credit Card**, especially those meant to "repair" your credit (if you're among that 40%). Typically those cards carry a small limit, charge in excess of 20% interest and a "membership fee" of \$49 to \$89 annually. If you charge up to the credit limit, the finance charges on the first following bill, when added to your purchases, will place you over the limit. You will then be charged an "overlimit fee" (typically about \$30/month). If you send a check around the due date, it will invariably be posted late, kicking in a "late fee" (another \$30/month). If you have such a credit card, the cost of charging \$1000 (if it's the credit limit) can cost up to 80% in interest in addition to the posted interest rate.

Another interesting example sometimes occurs when you are buying (and financing) a new car. I found this one out quite recently when I visited a local car dealer. I classify the following practice as predatory, not necessarily because of the exorbitant finance charges, but because of the deception involved. Here, you buy and finance a new car. You reach a deal and the "credit manager" fills out your paperwork. You sign the numerous forms and you're on your way with your new purchase. A couple of days later, you are asked to return to the dealer to sign some more paperwork, and your payments wind up to be \$30 to \$40 higher than you agreed to (and signed for) in the initial deal, presumably because the dealer "went out on a limb" because of your "questionable" credit. Indeed, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.



# May 2003 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 5th & 19th**  
6:00PM, Merritt Island, across from Merritt Square Mall

**C.A.B.A.G.E. (North) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 14th & 28th**  
Merritt Square Mall

**C.A.B.A.G.E. (South) at Books-A-Million: Wednesday, the 21st**  
6:30PM, 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**

*Karen@Freiberg.com*

**C.A.B.A.G.E. South Host: Clara Woodall-Moran**

*cew@cfl.rr.com*

**April 27th**

**4:00 p.m.**

**ExComm Meeting**

**Sunday**

**Free**

**S/P (1 friendly dog )**

The Executive Committee of the group meets to conduct its monthly business. All members are welcome to attend, to volunteer, and to see how things are done. This month's meeting will be held at the *home of our Treasurer, Helen Lee Moore.*

**Clara Woodall-Moran, LocSec**

*cew@cfl.rr.com*

**Helen Lee Moore**

*76764.3242@compuserve.com*

**3rd**

**6:30 p.m.**

**Get Out AND Vote Party**

**Saturday**

**\$3.00 or FREE for Voters!**

**SS/P (2 cute kitty cats)**

As in prior years, a party is being thrown to get SCAMsters to vote in the coming Ex-Comm election. This year J.T and Clara are hosting. If you bring your ballot with you and hand it in J.T., you party for free! Save cash while having a good time.

**J.T. Moran and Clara Woodall-Moran**

*morwood@cfl.rr.com*

**9th**

**6:00 p.m.**

**Firearms & Fried Rice**

**Friday**

**Range & Meal costs**

**S/NP**

Time to get your weaponry out of storage and loose a few rounds down range. Meet us at 6:00PM at the *Gun Site Range, 124 S. Banana River Dr., Merritt Island*, or just show up at about 7:00PM at the *New Century Buffet at 729 N. Courtenay Pkwy. Merritt Island*

**J.T. Moran**

*morwood@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.

*morwood@cfl.rr.com*



**A View... From  
Somewhere Else**

**Follow The  
Money: Part III**

by

**Hank Rhodes**

©2003

*Author's note: This is part of a recurring, but irregular series of articles discussing the recurring and irregular dispersion of public resources.*

**W**ith the media serving us "All-War, All-the-Time" coverage of the current crisis (hopefully brought to a successful conclusion by the time you read this), it is easy to lose track of events on the home front, especially new developments regarding old stories.

Remember the great California energy crisis of 2001? Back then, we were told that the price escalation and power shortages were the result of "failed deregulation," implying that the state government was so incompetent it could not even wash its hands and walk away from an area of responsibility without creating havoc. Certainly, market forces (i.e., profit motives) couldn't be to blame.

Now it turns out that the crisis was in fact artificially manipulated by energy traders. In March the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) found that energy companies engaged in bogus trades and price-fixing during 2001, and ordered the responsible firms (which include Enron) to refund \$3.3 billion. <sup>1</sup>

Going back a little farther, remember the great healthcare reform debate of 1993? Back then, we were told that we couldn't trust the government to establish a fair and equitable system. Somehow the insurance companies and big health care providers were going to take care of us.

Meanwhile, the crisis in health care grows, to the point where trauma care centers are ceasing operations and doctors are leaving the profession. Now we are being told that the problem is excessive litigation and windfall awards in court. Closer investigation indicates these windfall jury verdicts are rare, and when they do occur, are almost always significantly reduced by appeal or by out-of-court settlement. The truth is that the insurance companies are desperately trying to recapture some of the assets they lost in the recent stock market crash, and raising doctor's malpractice premiums is the method of choice. <sup>2,3</sup>

The solution to the healthcare crisis, say conservative pundits, is for us to surrender our right to just compensation when we are maimed by negligent or incompetent practice of medicine.

Interesting how conservatives, who "trust the people, not big government" are not willing to trust the people who serve on juries and threaten the welfare of big companies. Instead, conservatives are perfectly willing to use the power of big government to help out their friends in the insurance industry.

The "better way" conservatives kept promising us in 1993 never quite seemed to materialize.

Then there's the case of Mr. Richard Perle, who formerly chaired an organization called the Defense Policy Board. While nominally this is a

group of unpaid volunteers, this is actually a very powerful entity that wields great influence over the Defense Department.

Recently, it came to light that Mr. Perle was owed over \$700,000 by Global Crossing (a.k.a. the “liberals’ Enron”) for consulting services. The owners of Global Crossing wish to sell the remnants of the bankrupt company to Hutchison Whampoa, a Chinese corporation, in a deal that is subject to scrutiny by the Department of Defense and the FBI on national security grounds. When this case of apparent influence-peddling became public, Mr. Perle denied any conflict of interest, resigned from his chairmanship (but not from the board itself), and has pledged to donate his earnings to charity. <sup>4, 5</sup>

Interestingly enough, Mr. Perle is representative of a group of modern conservatives who are quite willing to seek solutions to international problems by military action, and the consequent risk of death and dismemberment to our servicemen, even though they themselves never served in the military when they were of age.

In the eyes of conservatives, lack of personal experience in the military is only a liability in the case of “liberal” politicians.

Mr. Perle dismisses this point as “just monstrously unfair” and “an intimidating McCarthyite tactic.” <sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, Mr. Perle ignores the fact that we have a perfect example of an intimidating McCarthyite tactic in the prevailing attitude that those who do not fall into lockstep with the current regime are damned as “un-patriotic” and “un-American.” After all, in a democracy, it is the right, if not the duty, of a loyal opposition to question the ill-advised actions of the administration in power. These spurious charges of disloyalty are all the more ironic, considering the vociferous opposition by the conservatives to the actions of the Clinton administration, even after we had troops on the ground in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Indeed, it is quite easy to lose track of problems at home when a war is in progress, especially when any questions about policy are summarily dismissed as disloyal acts to our fine servicemen and women. To the policy makers sheltered in safety on the home front, however, warfare must certainly seem like a convenient smokescreen.

## Notes

1. “California energy market manipulated, regulators say” *USA Today*, March 27, 2003 p.1B
2. “Doctors rally for tort reform” *Florida Today*, March 28, 2003 p.3A
3. “Malpractice ‘crisis’ is a tenuous claim” *Florida Today*, March 2, 2003 p.3A
4. “Watchdog Group Asks for Perle Investigation” *Reuters*, March 31, 2003
5. “Perle has no place on defense panel” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 31, 2003
6. “Thinktank with Ben Wattenberg” <http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/transcript1017.html>



**The Gourmet's  
Guide:**

**Stuttgart**

by

**Art Belefant**

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(belefant@juno.com)

It isn't much of a town by most measures, a population of just under 10,000, 38 churches, three elementary schools, one high school, one library, eight motels, and two shopping centers. There's about 25 eating places in town, consisting of pizzerias, fast foods, some franchises, and a few local home-style restaurants. The top restaurant is a Chinese buffet. That's every day of the year except the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving

when the city comes alive with the annual World's Championship Duck Calling Contest.

Coinciding with the duck hunting season, people come from all over the world to compete for the prizes. The prizes for the first place winner for 2002 World's Championship included \$8,000 cash, a trophy, a duck boat, a watch, a gold ring, a Remington shotgun, \$650 in gift certificates, and many other items including a bunch of dog food. The first, second, third runner-ups get equally impressive prizes, and plaques are awarded through the tenth runner up.

On Friday and Saturday the main street of Stuttgart, Arkansas, is blocked off. Tents are set up for manufacturers to display and sell duck calls, duck hunting gear, duck mementoes, and the usual and unusual ancillary items. There is also a midway at one end of Main Street with the usual rides. The duck call manufacturers fill one tent and the cacophony of salesmen demonstrating their duck calls and potential buyers trying out the various models offered, present a continuous droning like an army of bagpipes gone mad. It fills the town and neighboring areas with their raucous sound.

At the other end of the street, a stand is set up for the actual duck call contest. A continuous parade of aspirants step up to the platform to display their prowess to the judges. There are categories for World Champion, Women, Intermediate, Junior, Arkansas State, and Chick & Sophie Major Memorial, all of which have their own list of prizes. During the Duck Call Festival the Queen Mallard is crowned, the winner of a beauty contest earlier that week.

Rita and I arrived in Stuttgart on Thanksgiving, not



for the duck calling contests, but to be with our grandchildren; however, the festival couldn't be avoided. Unfortunately we arrived too late to join the Duck Gumbo Cook-Off. That's where almost 50 teams each cook three quarts of gumbo where at least 50% of the meat used must be duck. However, we did get our duck.



As wild, hunted game may not be legally sold, other means must be used to obtain it. Our son-in-law has many friends in Stuttgart, some of whom are duck hunters. He is not. By prevailing upon their friendship he was able to obtain three ducks for us, perfectly legally. After our Thanksgiving dinner of turkey, he and I prepared the duck for our next big meal.

Stuttgart sits in the middle of a vast rice growing area known as the Grand Prairie. The land is flat, even flatter than Florida, and the soil is relatively impermeable, thus it can be diked and flooded in paddies for growing rice. Our daughter and son-in-law work as scientists at the Department of Agriculture station in Stuttgart studying, you guessed it, rice.

Stuttgart is also the home of Riceland, the rice growers' co-operative. With all that grain around and the flooded paddies, the area around Stuttgart is an ideal resting place for ducks on their annual migrations north and south. Thus many hunters come here to hunt duck in season and thus the duck calling contests were organized.

The first contest took place in 1936 and the first prize was won by



Thomas E. Walsh without the use of a duck call. The first prize was a hunting coat valued at \$6.60. Every winner since then has used a duck call even the one woman who won Word's Championship.

At a break in the duck calling contests, a man demonstrated duck calling without a duck call. He sounded the same to me as people using a duck call. I'm surprised that he left the stage unbloodied by the duck call manufacturers who sell their products starting at \$20 each and going up to the hundreds of dollars.



## **The Alchemist: Shorts**



**Al Thomas**

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al@mutualfund  
magic.com

**S**horts. Let's see. If there are shorts there must be longs. Which is best? Longs or shorts?

If you are trading in the stock market experts like longs better than shorts. If you are "long" that means you own stock and that is "good". If you are short you have sold stock and that is "bad". At least that is what Wall Street preaches. And why do they want to make you believe this and is it true? Let's examine the facts.

Today I hear stories on the financial news and there are articles in the paper that people who are "short" driving the market down. They have sold more stock than they own and this is causing the market to collapse. I even hear that Congress is trying to pass a law that will not allow people to sell short. They are blaming hedge funds who are allowed to sell short. The basic flaw in this concept is when a short sale is initiated it must be done on an up tick. That means the stock must be going up in order to make a "short" sale. No short sale may be made to pressure the market down. That is a fatal pin in the balloon of that lie.

There are reasons people will make the sale of a stock. If you own it you may just need the money now or if it is going down you may not want to lose money should the downward trend continue. There is an old saying in the market – "the trend is your friend". If you see a stock that is declining you may want to sell it first and when it declines further you will buy it back at a lower price later on. This actually puts a floor under that stock because some time in the futures you MUST buy it. Whoever is doing the shorting does not matter whether it is an individual or a hedge fund. They are actually doing two things that are both good for the market. They are providing a future buy to support the price at a lower level that keeps it from going lower and they are providing liquidity to the market.

When you buy long you want it to go up so you can sell it later at a profit. When you sell short you sell it now with the idea of buying it back after it declines. Both are driven by the profit motive. How can one be good and the other bad? It is like saying there is good electricity and bad electricity.

If company CEOs don't want people to short their stock I suggest they look in the mirror to find out who is at fault. The CEO is not running his company properly and that is why the stock is declining. No outside person or group can drive a stock lower that is making a good profit. There is a good reason for the price decline.

Buying short does not put the market down. The ultimate outcome of a short sale (covering the short) is very positive for the market.

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**A View  
from the Right:**

**Mixed Emotions**

by

**J.T. Moran**

(morwood@cfl.r.com)

*"Let them hate us so long as they fear us"*

**Emperor Gaius Caesar Augustus Germanicus**

One of the cries from the appeasement crowd that never ceases to amaze (or is that amuse?) me is "why do they hate us?" or "why don't they like us?" My response is usually "why should I care right now?" Now, since I know there will be many out there who will protest that the only true way to peace is through understanding, I will take the time to explain my seeming indifference.

First of all, the response to the first question is that I don't really believe there are that many foreigners who "hate" America. Hate is an irrational emotion, manifested almost exclusively in religious fanatics and sociopaths of all stripes. Suicide bombers are a good example. In many ways this also applies to those so-called "anti-war" protesters who are really "anti-Bush". Their extreme reaction to our President colors their viewpoint of anything he undertakes to the point that they cannot see anything but the fact that it is associated with G.W. Bush. The hypocrisies shown by the Liberals in this country about military actions demonstrates this. If the president is Republican, they are very vocal and public in their criticism (Reagan putting Pershing missiles in Europe and the conflict in Grenada; G.H. Bush with Panama and Desert Storm; and G.W. Bush in Afghanistan and now in Iraq). But under Clinton there was a deafening silence of criticism about his unilateral assaults on Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Haiti, and Bosnia, or his use of our armed forces in Somalia. In fact, those self-same peaceniks of today were most vocally supportive of a Democrat flexing the nation's military muscle. So what could explain this dichotomy? What was the difference? Only the party affiliation of the Commander-in-Chief.

So in this instance of domestic disharmony, a question must be asked of our friends on the Left: has your hatred of President George W. Bush expanded to the point that you are willing to see harm come to this nation and its armed forces before you would deign to support them? I ask this in all sincerity. The actions we see of the protest groups out there would seem to indicate that it is the case. When they would prevent shipment of supplies to the forces in Iraq, as was the case in Oakland by the group *Direct Action to Stop the War*, they are acting in violation of *U.S. Code Title 18, Part I, Chapter 105, Section 2153* - in other words, they are willfully committing **SABOTAGE**. In a protest march in San Francisco they "anti-war" activists were carrying a sign: "*We support our troops when they shoot their officers*", referencing the attack by a US Marine who had converted to Islam. A Columbia University assistant professor tells the members of a "teach-in" that he hopes for "*a million Mogadishus*", referring to the dragging of American soldiers' bodies through the streets. Are these people "anti-war"? Not a chance. They are simply anti-American.

In Washington, DC, the Left side of the aisle in both houses also seems

intent upon providing comfort to the enemy. The continual denigration of the President by Democrat presidential hopefuls, during a time when America is at war, smacks of nothing more than using the war for political gain. While that is truly low, the actions of eleven Dems in the House are nothing short of despicable.

On March 22, House Resolution 104 was proposed, expressing *“the unequivocal support and appreciation of the Nation: (1) to the President as Commander-in-Chief for his firm leadership and decisive action in the conduct of military operations in Iraq as part of the on-going Global War on Terrorism; (2) to the members of the U.S. armed forces serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, who are carrying out their missions with excellence, patriotism, and bravery; and (3) to the families of the U.S. military personnel serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom, who are providing support and prayers for their loved ones currently engaged in military operations in Iraq.”* Eleven members of the United States House of Representatives voted **“NO”**. The eleven, all Democrats, could not find it in them to put aside their hatred of G.W. Bush long enough to express their support of the men and women fighting (and dying) in the service of their country. One of the nay-sayers even had the audacity to later state: *“In spite of our policy differences, I do support our young men and women in uniform. What I cannot support, though, is this resolution that endorses war against Iraq.”* Sorry, but that explanation fails to support her vote, or the fine Americans fighting in Iraq.

However, even with as despicable an act as having voted “No” going against them, their act garnered a measure of respect from me, because they at least exhibited the courage to vote their convictions. Twenty-two other members of the House couldn’t even do that. Twenty-one Democrats and one Republican voted **“Present”**, in a pitiable attempt to salvage a political no-win situation. They obviously hope to be able to tell their constituents that they did not vote against the resolution, while also being able to tell their ultra-liberal contributors that they didn’t vote for it. What I fully expect to see happen in 2004 is for the Dems to try a repeat of 1992, when they bamboozled the Republicans into not using their record on Desert Storm as a campaign issue. Hopefully, these thirty-three pitiful excuses for American legislators will find that the electorate is better informed than they think, and that they will find their sorry butts occupying seats in the unemployment office, rather than in the hallowed halls of Congress.

It is fairly evident that the strongest emotion involved domestically is a personal hatred of G.W. Bush, but what about the foreign angle. Why do they hate us?

Well, it is my belief that hate is not the primary emotion. And that it varies from region to region.

I recall a line from a novel I once read (Heinlein, I think) that stated that the Japanese have twelve ways of saying “thank you”, and that each one also infers a different intensity of resentment. And that, I believe, is the emotion that rules in Europe.

Western Europe, at any rate. The French have never gotten over the fact that they have been a second-rate military power ever since Napoleon was defeated. They resent the upstart barbarians of the uncivilized U.S. for being everything they wish to be: rich, powerful, and envied. And just like the envious in other matters, they feel that they must bring down what they envy, rather than raise themselves up. And while it is true that without their aid America might never have come to be (although logistics were working against the British after 4 years of war), it is also true that without America a conquered France would assuredly still be saluting the German flag. And that fact rankles most of all.

The Germans are beginning to remember their martial glories... that twice were ended by America stepping in. It is easy to see that their resentment of what they see as America's butting in on conflicts that didn't involve it would still fester in their memories. So they join hands with an unlikely ally – France – to counter America's dominant presence in the world.

Russia has an even bigger reason to envy the US: at one time it was our equal, even stronger militarily, in some ways. But never as productive, never as wealthy. Just more feared.

Surprisingly, it is the former Eastern Bloc that has become our strongest supporters in Europe, outside of England. Or, maybe not surprisingly, as it was America's confrontation with the USSR that eventually led to its dissolution, freeing the satellite countries it annexed by force after World War II.

In the despotisms of the Middle East, it is fear that rules the day. A fear that the freedoms that exemplify America will somehow infect their populace with the same desires of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. So they teach their children to hate America and call for “jihad”, a holy war, knowing full well that in open combat they cannot win. Among other things, they count on the sensitivity of the American populace to sights of dead women and children to protect them from the retaliation they know America could rain down upon them.

All around the world it is the same: envy of what America represents. Sure, our detractors emphasize those aspects that are negative: the crime, the moral depravity, etc., but the envy is not for those aspects, it is for the freedoms this nation enjoys, most especially, the freedom to improve your lot in life, to strive to be all you can be, without fearing the knock on the door in the middle of the night.

There is little reason for any foreign “hatred” of America. The past century has proved it time and again: never in the history of humanity has there been a nation so powerful that did not use that power aggressively. We give tens of billions annually in governmental foreign aid, and more in private charitable aid. We are the first to offer assistance to any nation in times of national disaster. And we demand nothing in return. Maybe we should.

Next: What America should do about its image. If anything at all.



## **The 10th Story**

by

**Elissa Rudolph,**

**RVC10**

**RVC10@us.mensa.org**

**M**ore number news - before March 31 American Mensa reached the high water mark of 51,208, which is 2.8% over last year's high mark. 76% of those Ms renewed by the deadline. All those numbers are encouraging, especially in light of the world situation. Hey, we still need to gather round with friends and enjoy our differences.

It snowed in Pittsburgh on the Sunday after the AMC meeting! Haven't seen that stuff for a few years—brushing it off the car, with a handy tool supplied by the rental car company—brought back nostalgic memories. The March meeting was a productive one and did not run long into the night, as some do. Much needed revisions to Mensa's hearings procedures were adopted. A policy to allow a parent/guardian of anyone under the age of 18 to attend Mensa events free of charge was passed. If the adult wishes to participate he/she can by paying the same fee as anyone else. AG 2005 was awarded conditionally to two Louisiana groups who will organize the gathering in New Orleans. The mini-minutes will carry more information.

By the time you read this, the Fort Lauderdale Leadership Development Workshop will be over. I hope you attended, had a good time meeting other Ms, and took some great ideas back home. If you couldn't make it, think about it for next Spring. I'd like to plan another LDW north of Lake O next April.

Have a great Spring! And see you in Rocky Point!!

## **COMING EVENTS**

May 23-26, Tampa Bay Mensa's, **The Fellowship of the RG**, Jack Brawner ([trojanowl@aol.com](mailto:trojanowl@aol.com)) or John Raymond ([jmraymond3@aol.com](mailto:jmraymond3@aol.com)). It's a return to the water at the Days Inn, Rocky Point, off the causeway.



## **Now Is The Time...**

by

**Fran Hinson,**

**NomElComm**

**Chair(wo)man**

**E**lections do not always go off without a hitch, as we Floridians well know. And this year, for SCAM, is no exception.

As you most likely have already noted, James Dace is no longer on the ballot. He notified the NomElComm and ExComm that he had to withdraw for good and valid reasons. But you are still voting for an ExComm of up to 5 members. So you can vote for any combination of announced candidates and write-ins, but do not exceed 5 names on the ballot, or it will be thrown out as invalid.

Mensa International also had a SNAFU in this years election procedures. The Zip code on the blue ballot envelope wrong. The proper zip is **76006**.



# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RG

May 23-26, 2003

Tampa, Florida

Join Tampa Bay Mensa as we make our Tolkien gesture toward celebrating Memorial Day weekend! There will be many activities to entertain and amuse you and much good food and drink - enough to satisfy even a hungry and thirsty hobbit!



++ ++  
The Fellowship of the RG

The Days Inn Rocky Point is the host hotel (jet-ski rentals, etc. are available), and the address is 7627 Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, FL 33607. It's near Tampa International Airport, and shuttle service is provided. Call (813) 281-0000 or (800) 237-2555 for the special room rate of \$55 per night.

## Full registration:

\$60 until March 31 \_\_\_\_\_

\$65 April 1-30 \_\_\_\_\_

\$70 after April 30 \_\_\_\_\_

## Partial Registrations:

Friday \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday \$35 \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday \$35 \_\_\_\_\_

Monday \$15 \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Refunds must be requested by April 30.*

Mail to:

*Kathy Crum, Registrar  
7164 Quail Hollow Blvd.  
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544*

Make check payable to:  
Tampa Bay Mensa

Full details at: [tampa.us.mensa.org/03-TBM-RG.php](http://tampa.us.mensa.org/03-TBM-RG.php) (*case sensitive*)

**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 - Money placed into a bank account - that portion of a ship's hull above the waterline
- 2 - Nazi secret police - amount charged for mailing
- 3 - A male goose - roamed in exploration
- 4 - A rope attached to the lower corner of a sail - not THOSE
- 5 - A minister's residence - society of the highly intelligent

*(Answers will be found below)*



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

We now have a single email address for the group – **SCAM@cfl.rr.com**. If you want to email the Editor, for example, just use “Editor” (without the quotes) in the subject line. A list of the subject line keywords will soon be provided at the web site and in the newsletter.

The web has been getting face-lifts while working out the kinks of the new style. If you have not been there since about mid-March of this year – check it out now. The calendar grid got a face-lift at the beginning of April so check it out as well.

The website continues to garner compliments from those who see it - your webmaster was asked to create one for her group out at KSC after her boss saw SCAM's. So there's hope for some recognition from the PRP. We should know soon!

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

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**We Have....**



**The Answers!**

- 1 - deposit - topside
- 2 - gestapo - postage
- 3 - gander - ranged
- 4 - sheet - these
- 5 - manse - Mensa