

The

SCAM

page oast rea ensa



Endangered Memories of Old Florida

Volume 24, No. 2

February, 2006

All submissions must be received by the Editor before the 10th of the month preceding publication. Please allow extra time for mailed submissions, which may be **typed** or **legibly handwritten**. Whenever possible, we prefer submissions via e-mail. They may be in **e-mail text** or any of most **word processing** formats. All submissions should be sent to the **Editor**, whose contact information appears on Page 2.

Writer's Block

Mike Moakley, Editor

Many moons ago, while I was attending Brevard Community College, I had the dubious pleasure of taking a Humanities I class (Hum One...) to complete my AA degree requirements. In order to fulfill the "Gordon Rule" requirements imposed on the course, one of the essays assigned to the class was to respond to the question: "Is it better to be a participant or a spectator?"

Being nearly twice the age of many of my classmates, and in possession of some worldly experience, I had come to the conclusion that college instructors favored the thoughtful development of an "out-of-the-ordinary" viewpoint. I surmised that most, if not all, of my classmates would state in their essays that it is better to be a participant.

My essay, then, posited that it was indeed better to be a spectator. To support my argument, I created an imaginary Super Bowl game. In life, I had noticed that many football fans tend to be "armchair quarterbacks" seemingly knowing better than the players how to win a game. Back to my Super Bowl scenario, instead of watching TV as in the past, the fans would actually participate in this game, all as quarterbacks! As, like in real life, none could agree on the plays, the "Super Bowl Massacre" ensued, resulting in a death toll unmatched by any major war. Thus, it was "better" to be a spectator.

Yet, when we're talking about a group that exists solely for the benefit of its members, can we truly state that it is bet-

***The SCAM* sells classified ad space.** SCAM members, non-commercial, no charge. Others: \$20 full page; \$10 half-page; \$5 quarter-page per month, we offer discounts for multiple insertions, and we can help with layout and design.

Subscriptions: SCAM members, included in dues; others, **\$10** for 12 issues.

(Continued from page 3)

ter not to participate? With this state of affairs, who really wins, and who loses? One winner might be the volunteer for the sought after position, as he or she may have more power than intended – after all, who else is there? The losers could well be the membership as a whole, who just might find that those in power have views quite different from their own.

Why, you may ask, do I bring this up? For starters, we need a new Circulation person. Clara Woodall-Moran, who has performed this function since well before I became Editor, will be stepping down after the March issue is in the mail. If you're interested in the position, give me a call or e-mail me. ExComm elections are coming up. The NomElCom will be seated in the next month or so, and will actively be seeking candidates. Will you be a candidate, or are you satisfied with the status quo?

Are you happy with the content of each SCAM? Perhaps you find it too political, or perhaps The SCAM fails to express the views you hold. Perhaps you're interested in topics not currently covered in The SCAM. The solution is amazingly simple. Send a submission to The SCAM on a topic or view of your choice. This is not a "limited time offer," as this offer never expires. Now it's up to you.

About the front cover: *On December 6, 2005, my father-in-law, Paris Senters, 81, passed away while fishing along the St. John's River, his true home for the last 40-plus years. Paris and I represented two different worlds. As a "city boy", I had never before been on the St. John's River, or gone anywhere on an airboat. In fulfilling his wishes, several family members, myself included, boarded an airboat with his cremated remains and spread the ashes along the river.*

During that trip, I realized that among my regrets is that during my first half-century of life, I had missed the unique beauty that Paris had known only too well. So, in his memory, the next several covers will depict some scenes of the unique beauty of Florida before these, too, become only a memory. Featured this month is an old weather station along the St. John's River, not far away from where he had spent his last moments.

—Mike Moakley, Editor

Part 1. SOME RANDOM, INFORMAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE STRUCTURAL DESIGN OF BUILDINGS IN FLORIDA SUBJECT TO HURRICANE AND OTHER FORCES.

 **ur intrepid Editor** has asked me to air (err) some views of mine on this subject. I have been an architect and structural engineer for over 50 years and think that we can, indeed, design and plan our buildings to resist hurricane and other forces.

Dead Loads

First, a word about the loads that act on our buildings. The most constant force of all is the pull of gravity exerting its force on all the fixed components that make up the building – roofing, walls, floors, partitions, steel beams, concrete, masonry, flooring, fixtures, equipment, and the like – a force referred to as “dead load” on and of the building. One of the heaviest materials is concrete (sometimes mistakenly called cement) which weighs 150 pounds per cubic foot (pcf). One disadvantage of concrete structures is that they usually weigh much more than the loads they were designed to support. Inefficient (but fireproof).

These loads all act vertically and the building’s structural frame must resist them. Another, somewhat special, case of dead load is the horizontal component of pressure on basement walls from the dead load of the soil outside the building. Buildings that are buried for some military, mining or secrecy reasons have a dead load of soil on the roof, sometimes called overburden. So, dead loads that act on a building are not always vertical and not always inside the building. .

Live Loads

Other vertical loads on buildings are termed “live loads”, the less constant forces – the shifting, varying weights of people, furnishings, vehicles, snow and ice on the roofs. A horizontal type of live load are the forces applied by wind (our hurricanes) on that part of the building above ground. Earthquakes, (now called seismic events) cause rapidly fluctuating horizontal displacements of the ground on which the building stands, are also horizontal live loads. So we have hurricanes above ground and earthquakes and soil pressures below ground that act mostly laterally on our buildings along with the other normal live and dead loads inside the

buildings acting vertically. Happily, in Brevard County, we don't have to consider seismic forces in our designs.

Virtually all buildings are required to be designed to support the live loads, as prescribed by codes, expressed in pounds per square foot (psf), for that particular type of building. For example, first floor corridors in most office (and a lot of other) buildings are required to be designed for a live load of 100 psf. A library floor in the stack rooms where books are stored is required to be designed for a 250 psf live load. Roofs of all buildings are designed for snow loads which vary from 20 psf (us) to 40 psf (Minnesota, Canada and other cold places) There are numerous special cases where roofs are also promenades and must be designed for more than snow loads and special kinds of buildings such as stadia, factories, parking structures, storage warehouses, and so on.

Impact Loads

There are other special considerations we run across. A crane load is suddenly lifted off a factory floor and causes a degree of impact on the crane and supporting structure. This is usually handled by adding a 10% factor to the load being lifted along with a lateral impact load factor of 20% on traveling crane trolleys.. The largest impact requirement is 100% for supports of elevators. In an opposite approach, if an open floor area is large enough, say two thousand square feet or so, we can reduce the live load by a specified amount. This satisfies the statistical probability that the entire area is unlikely to be loaded simultaneously. For heavier loads in excess of 100 psf, usually no reduction is allowed.

Wind Loads

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has, for years, published a highly detailed brochure on the various types of loading on buildings and how to design for them. Most building codes (maybe all) now adopt the ASCE requirements, by reference, into their own requirements. So let's see what ASCE has to say about designing for hurricane force winds.

The wind loads on our buildings are a combination of several factors. Those factors are a little elaborate and are:

1. Basic wind velocity.
2. Condition of adjacent terrain.
3. Topography at the building.
4. Height of the building

(Continued on page 8)

How can anything “reverse” be a profit? I go to the Money Show every year to visit with friends who have booths and are speakers. Then when folks are filing out of lectures I listen to their comments about what I know the speaker has been saying.

The Money Show is for investors from all walks of life; however, my guess is the median age is close to 60. Those who go have accumulated a nest egg and now are retired or very close to retirement. They came to learn more about how to make their money grow.

Last year there were 256 separate events not counting what was given in the Exhibition Hall. Almost without exception speakers were showing how cash can accumulate faster if the listener bought his product whether it was a mutual fund, stock, bond, partnership, software or who knows what. Are there that many money makers out there?

One speaker had an hour telling the market was due to crash and the thing to do was buy long term put option. He also said if you would not do that to buy some government bonds which were paying about 2 to 3%. The exit comments I heard were pretty well summed up by one lady who said, “Is he nuts? How can we live off 2%?” When in a bear market the old saying is, “He who loses the least is a winner”. No, it’s difficult to live on that small a return, but don’t lose large sums by trying to be invested at all times. There have been many years in the past where cash with no percent return beat the heck out of the stock market.

Go back to 2000 and remember that the NASDAQ lost 78% of its value in 3 years. If you had been in cash from 2000 to 2003 you would have saved about 40% to 60% of our retirement account. The Buy N Holders have still not recovered their investments.

Selling out near (I did not say at) the top, say within about 10 or 15%, the account would have remained pretty darn healthy. Many investors lost 30 to 40% or more of their hard-earned money and they would have been able to buy back many more shares when the market resumed its upward journey. That is what I refer to as a “reverse profit”. The profit is what was not lost by listening to the Buy N Hold brokers and financial planners.

There are hundreds of thousands of investors who have learned not to allow their portfolios to depreciate more than 10 to 15% because they have learned to sell when their equities start to go down. They sell and reinvest in a better stock or fund or some-

THE ALCHEMIST, Continued.

(Continued from page 7)

times just leave it in cash if there is not a good equity to buy. The winning principle of the stock market is having an exit strategy that will prevent losing money.

There are times when having cash at zero percent return will beat a negative 45% in the overall market. What you don't lose is called a "reverse profit".

Al Thomas' best selling book, "If It Doesn't Go Up, Don't Buy It!" has helped thousands of people make money and keep their profits with his simple 2-step method. Read the first chapter and receive his market letter for 3 months at no charge at www.mutualfundmagic.com and discover why he's the man that Wall Street does not want you to know. Copyright 2006 All rights reserved.

BUILDING FOR HURRICANES, Continued.

(Continued from page 6)

5. Importance of the building as regards human life and/or necessary services.

To get an idea of the wind load forces involved, it is noted that the wind force is a factor of the wind velocity squared. To keep it simple at first, let's assume that all the modifying factors 2. through 5. above each equal 1.0 (For most cases, they vary from about .8 to 1.2). The equation for converting wind speed to wind force is:

$$\text{Force (psf)} = .00256(V \text{ in mph} - \text{squared})$$

For a wind speed of 150 mph, we have a force (or load) of $.00256 \times 150 \times 150 = 57.6$ psf. A rule of thumb I think of is that a 200 mph wind causes a pressure of about 100 psf. So a wind speed of 200 mph. causes a lateral load of 100 psf on the sides and roofs of our poor buildings. Astounding! 100 psf is one of the larger live loads, normally speaking, acting in the usual vertical fashion. Now we have the same large force acting horizontally on the outside of our weary building!!

More later. We will discuss the design of a mythical building here in Brevard County.

Thomas E.M. Wheat, NCARB, AIA, PE

I have been eagerly awaiting books from a couple of my favorite authors (at least one favorite is unlikely to write much any time soon – Dick Frances is still grieving over the death of his wife), Sue Grafton and Patricia Cornwell. These two women have very strong heroines. The similarities stop there – even the style of presenting these lead characters.

Sue Grafton's book titles have all begun with a letter: "A is for Alibi", "B is for Burglar", etc. The current title is "S is for Silence". The premise is that Kinsey Millhone is hired by a woman whose mother disappeared 34 years before on July 4th. No trace of the woman or her pet dog had been found. The police gave it a cursory glance only because of the age of the woman and the fact that her husband was abusive. Kinsey lives in the past – her time is in the 1980s. She lives in California. Kinsey is strong for a woman in the 1980s – she works and does well for herself as a private investigator. She lives inexpensively in a rented apartment (converted from a garage). She cuts her hair with a pair of manicure scissors. She does real things like having to find a place to go to the bathroom when it is not really convenient. The reader can warm up to Kinsey. Although she seems to have trouble keeping a good man in her life – she does seem to actually want one but things that girls normally know how to do are a mystery to Kinsey so she is not able to attract normal ones. She has married twice – both were complete losers, she has a "man of mystery" in her life and she has fallen for another man who ended the relationship to return to his wife.

Patricia Cornwell's Kate Scarpetta is not a likeable woman. The reader cannot warm up to her at all. One never sees her as vulnerable. She has trouble with maintaining a job. She has been the Forensic Pathologist for the State of Virginia. She had to raise her niece because her sister was mentally unstable and unfit to be a parent. Kate has two loves, Benton Wesley and Pete Marino. One is upper-crust New England, the other lower class New Jersey (not too hard to figure which is which). The niece is dysfunctional to the point that she cannot keep a job so between them they open a Forensic Academy. Pete Marino works with them as does Benton. There are minor characters around them but most are what I call "poster board" characters. They seem to have about a half-inch of depth.

In "S is for Silence", Grafton has the chapter devoted to each "player" in the mystery. This is a very different style for Grafton

and one that I liked. We were provided insight that Kinsey has to figure out for herself. The way she gets to the conclusion is an interesting walk through the lives of some folks in a small during the 1950s.

Cornwell's book, "PREDATOR" delves into Dissociative Identity (or multiple personality). It also delves into the mind of serial killers (asking the question, does the mind of a Ted Bundy work in different ways from the mind of a normal person?). In its own "split personality" the book tries to get into too much of CIS with the forensics. None of her characters are likable and are cold enough to freeze hell. I have a phobia for spiders and had more sympathy for a tarantula than I did for all of the main characters. The victim was not easy to like either.

For Kinsey, you can feel sorrow for the woman whose mother left her 34 years ago, taking only her pet dog and new car with her. For Kate, you cannot really feel sorry for the true victim in the book, the woman whose was so badly abused at age 12 as to break into several diverse personalities and begin a life of reliving the horror that caused the shattering by putting others through the same torture and worse. At least the two worst characters, a "Dr. Laura" knock-off and a "Dr. Grissom" wannabe get comeuppances worthy of their bad personalities.

All-in-all, the Cornwell book may be the last one I read, I'm just not that impressed with her style and motivation. She had a side-series of books which were very funny (once it is realized that they are "tongue in cheek"). However, the Grafton book is worth the "read". I'm glad Grafton is willing to finish out the alphabet.

<i>FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS</i>			
------------------------------------	--	--	--

<i>4th</i>	Dana Stetser	<i>16th</i>	Christopher Rawlins
<i>6th</i>	Dorothy Hickam	<i>17th</i>	Robert Lipton
<i>7th</i>	Heather Howard	<i>23rd</i>	Robert Hartman
<i>7th</i>	Robert Stubbe	<i>24th</i>	Phyl Sopkin
<i>11th</i>	Michael Moakley	<i>24th</i>	David White III
<i>13th</i>	Craig Reynolds	<i>26th</i>	Linda Martin
<i>14th</i>	Wynn Rostek	<i>29th</i>	Sherry Nutter

Just when I think that I have covered a subject in sufficient detail, along comes a news article that sends me back to my word processor. The headline in a December 15, 2005 article in the *Orlando Sentinel* says “Brazil’s transvestites may get bathrooms”. The article goes on to say “A bill passed by the Movalguaçu City Council . . . would require nightclubs, shopping malls, movie theaters and large restaurants to provide for a third type of bathroom for transvestites.”

As with many other seemingly outrageous concepts, this one may also have legs. Homosexual unions, whether defined as marriage or some other form of partnership, is commonplace. Because some men seem to have difficulty urinating in public, vision barriers between urinals are being designed into new construction and added to existing public toilets. As more conservative Muslims enter our society, we will certainly have to accommodate their religious principles in regards to the design of toilets. Thus we can expect that the transvestites’ demand for separate toilet facilities will eventually appear in the U. S. and increase in fervor.

Where can we expect the idea for separate toilets for transvestites go from here? The news article plainly described the proposed bill to accommodate men dressed as women. Wouldn’t women who prefer to dress as men not also demand their own bathrooms? The next step could be a demand for separate facilities for male homosexuals and female homosexuals. Think of that. Six separate facilities instead of just two. Think of the cost of construction, think of the waste (pun intended), and think of the ecology. More toilets, more urinals, more piping, more walls, more floors, all of which would have to be built in or added.

There is a preferable solution, not to build or create separate facilities, but to utilize a unisex system that is seen in many French public toilets. The facility is divided into two sections. The one on the left is a bank of urinals with vision barriers between. On the right are toilet stalls that go from floor to ceiling with doors that make each cubicle fully enclosed. This part of the facility is accessible to male and female users. The female user would nominally use a stall and the male would use one of the urinals unless he needs to defecate, in which case he would use one of the same stalls that the women would use.

What I had seen is that to use a urinal costs 2 Fr where to access a “Cabine” costs 2.7 Fr (this was before the introduction of the

For a start, let's clear up the issue of bated breath, an expression that appeared in last month's column. The material I sent in read ". . . our editor is waiting with baited breath . ." Shortly after submission I received a note from Mike asking, "One question: 'baited breath' - is there a fish joke in there somewhere?" Since I didn't read this missive until a day or two later, I didn't answer it and Mike dutifully corrected the text to "bated", the correct word for the expression. I'm sure he would have left it alone if I had any mention of fish in the column.

Now the question in my mind was whether this was a careless mistake on my part or an intentional pun with no fishy follow-through. You might think that I ought to know whether or not I was making an intentional pun, but things are not always so easy. I did write in a hurry and did not consider writing "bated". There was a brief image in my mind of something like a cat perched next to a mouse hole, having eaten some cheese, (the cat, that is, not the mouse) and breathing cheesy breath in the direction of the mouse hole. (as bait - get it) I am quite familiar with the proper meaning

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 11)

Euro). What would happen if a woman decided to save a few sous by using a urinal to urinate - she would be charged the same as a man. The difference in cost is fully justifiable. It costs more to build a toilet stall than to install a urinal. Also the water usage of a toilet is greater than that of a urinal. For even greater savings, waterless urinal should be used. The piping to the facility would be smaller as no water is supplied to a waterless urinal. The drain piping from the urinal and the facility as a whole could be reduced as no water flows out of the waterless urinals. The total water demand would also be reduced thus reducing the expense of supplying water to the toilet facility.

The modern French public toilets are unisex. There is still a charge for using them, but the charge is the same regardless of the use to which it is put. This solution is not the most economical as the cost of providing all toilets is greater than providing a combination of urinals and toilets.

So, for minimizing construction costs and for the ecological benefits, I say that we should all stand together.

(Continued from page 12)

of “bated breath”, breath held in because of fear or excitement.

I actually recall my first encounter with the word when reading Hamlet in high school. Hamlet fences with Laertes in the final scene. Laertes’ foil has been dipped in poison and is minus its protective tip. It’s supposed to be a friendly bout. Hamlet scores a few hits on Laertes who get irked and sticks Hamlet when he isn’t ready. They scuffle. They exchange foils. Hamlet sticks Laertes. Everybody is going down. The queen, after drinking a cup of poisoned wine, says to Hamlet, “The weapon is in your hand, unbated and envenomed”, a phrase I was impressed with at the time. Hamlet sticks the king. Only Horatio is left.

I recognized the word as belonging to the “bated breath” expression, which I had never, I’m sure, used in print so I hadn’t previously thought of its spelling. But a promptly conceived of “baited breath” as a pun of sorts, picturing someone awaiting something expectantly, rather than with fear or trepidation. Since then, that punning use of the phrase has been my standard. I had forgotten it was a pun. But a few days after this note from Mike, I was driving down A1A listening to, of all things, AM radio. Rush Limbaugh was talking about his problems with the law. Some prosecutors were after him for “doctor shopping” and had just received permission from a court to talk to some of his doctors, although they were barred from asking them any meaningful questions. Rush remarked that the prosecutors were waiting for reports with bated breath. Whereupon he made the sound of someone panting. So his image of the meaning is of someone eagerly awaiting. I see I’m in good company.

About that little ExComm meeting - and by the way, why ExComm with two ems and NomElCom with one? - where we voted to cancel the 2006 RG. The thinking was that it was not going to happen because we had still no viable venue, and no RG committee and that it was best to kill it and get it over with. I volunteered for the position of RG Chair for 2008, was appointed to that position and tasked with finding a venue, determining if the membership really wanted a 2008 RG, and if so, doing some preliminary planning. The planned membership survey should help determine attitudes re the RG. A current thought on that subject is that we might post the survey questions on the website and see how many members we can induce to respond. I’d be interested in comments on this notion. I am fishing for answers. (*With “baited” breath?? -Ed.*)

SCAM Calendar of Events for February 2006

1st - Wednesday 6:00 PM

COFFEE, ETC.

Come join us at the House of Joe, 1224 W. New Haven Ave., Melbourne. Great place for a get-together over coffee; a free Wi-fi connection is featured for those so inclined. *One of our best regular events.*

Contact: *Trish Thornton, e-mail: coffeetc@scam.us.mensa.org*

14th - Tuesday 12:00 Noon

SCRABBLE AT GRETCHEN'S

Join Gretchen for a challenging game of SCRABBLE at her home in Melbourne. Be sure to call for directions. We also meet at the same place and time on the 28th.

Contact: *Gretchen Zimmerman, 242-7257.*

25th - Saturday 6:00 PM

S.N.O.R.T.

Join us for some sushi and tempura at The SCAM's best attended event at Miyako's, 1411 S. Harbor City Blvd. (US#1) in Melbourne.

Contact: *Your Newsletter Editor, or e-mail: snort@scam.us.mensa.org.*

Calendar Updates

ATTENTION SCAM MEMBERS!

Every effort is made to bring to you an accurate up-to-date Calendar of Events. However, last minute changes can and do occur past newsletter deadline. For up-to-date info, visit scam.us.mensa.org and click on "Calendar".

Des, it's that time again to seek candidates to run for the 2006-07 SCAM ExComm. Presently, the NomElCom is being formed to perform that function. As of this writing, I am that committee's sole member—we need two more members. More importantly, we need your participation—whether you run for office or will vote for the candidate of your choice. Last year at this time, then-NomElCom Chairman Clara Woodall-Moran wrote a comprehensive article explaining the roles each member of the ExComm plays in running our fine organization—questions and answers from last year's article, in Clara's words, follow:

- 1. What do I have to do?** Each office comes with a set of duties. We have 5 seats on the ExComm: Local Secretary (LocSec) as the Chief Executive officer; The Assistant LocSec (figure it out on your own); Treasurer (again, figure it out on your own); Recording Secretary (keeps the minutes and gets them to the Editor for publication while maintaining all of the other records); Member-at-Large (a basic representative for all of the members). The group uses its own Bylaws, the National Bylaws, the guide lines and Standing Rules and Roberts Rules of Order for the conduct of business meetings.
- 2. Do I have to attend meetings?** – no more than 1 per Month. Our by-laws state we will have meetings at least quarterly. If you cannot attend a meeting, send a report to the Recording Secretary. Generally, the recording secretary would be hard-pressed to not attend all of the meetings.
- 3. I don't know how to do any of the jobs:** Let see: we print the minutes of every meeting in the newsletter. The minutes demonstrate how the meeting is run. On the other hand, the Treasurer simply keeps the money and the books for the group, the recording secretary records what transpires within the group and assistant locsec says “no report” and the Member-at-Large brings forward any concerns from the individual members (so generally, “no report”). Tell me truthfully that you are unable to do any of these duties.
- 4. I'm too busy** – I have worked incredible overtime and received two college degrees while an officer (generally LocSec) of the group. Convince me your life is busier.
- 5. I don't know anyone** – (and you never will if you never come to anything). JT Moran (my loving husband) ran for an office the first year of his membership. He served on RG Committees and the ExComm for most of the first 10 yrs of his membership. Trust me, he did not know anyone when he started doing this. On the other hand, I hid from the group for the first 10 years of my membership. Since then, for these last 10 years, I have been actively involved until this year. Now, I am just the circulation chair – I label and mail the newsletters – let me know if you need help getting yours.
- 6. How do we decide who does what?** At the first meeting, the elected offi-

cers figure out that part, you do not run for a specific seat. If you are chronically afraid, for instance, to be the treasurer (as am I – hate being responsible for someone else's money), say so. If you specifically want a chair, speak up. There are rules, though to follow for each seat. These are described in the rules, in the bylaws, etc.

7. Do I have to do anything? To run for office you must agree to do so and you can provide a campaign statement, to hold the office you have to attend the meetings and fulfill the obligations of the office.

8. Can I get paid for the job? What part of volunteer confused you?

9. Will the group buy equipment for me or reimbursement for items I might need for the job? Depends on what you want. You can always ask, the rest of the ExComm might agree or they might turn you down. Let me explain, some of the treasurers use a Microsoft program for keeping the books, others use Quicken and some use a pencil and paper. The group will help pay for the pencil and paper. . If a member of the group donated the requested equipment it would not be turned down.

10. I hate meetings. Only a person who loves to filibuster actually seems to derive enjoyment from meetings.

11. What if there is a controversy? Help resolve it. If you don't like the resolutions to the previous controversies, put yourself in a position to influence the results.

12. I like the current officers. They thank you but they would like a break.

13. How long do I have to serve?...terms are one year but if you like it you can run again.

14. Are there term limits? No. However, most have burned out after two times at bat as the LocSec.

15. Do I have to be on the RG committee if I am on the ExComm? There does not even have to be an RG committee – the choice belongs to the ExComm. If you want an RG, you might want to be on both.

16. Why is it so hard to get someone to run? I don't know, just apathy I guess.

17. If I run will I have to run again? No.

18. Do I have to progress through the offices? No.

19. Is there any good reason I should not run? Nope.

20. What if I lose? I have and the world did not come to an end.

21. What if I win? Congratulations will be in order.

22. What if I don't like the other officers? All the more reason to be on the ExComm. You have no influence off of it so if you do not like what the officers are doing, you should run.

The story so far: During the American Civil War, the French Emperor Napoleon III attempted to colonize Mexico. Sending an army across the Atlantic, Napoleon III installed the Austrian Prince, Maximilian, as the puppet ruler of Mexico. Most Mexican people supported the rightful government, led by the elected President, Benito Juarez.

Juarez responded to Maximilian's solicitation to surrender as follows:

"It is given a man, sir, to attack the rights of others, seize their goods, assault the lives of those who defend their nationality, make of their virtues crimes, and one's own vices a virtue, but there is one thing beyond the reach of such perversity: the tremendous judgment of history."

Curiously, once he was enthroned, Maximilian made some attempts to assimilate into Mexican society. Furthermore, he endorsed some of the reforms Juarez had initiated, and sought to become a champion for the peasants and the Indians.

Too independent to be a useful puppet, and too much of a reformer to satisfy the Mexican conservatives, Maximilian proved to be a disappointment to all who had supported his ascension as Emperor of Mexico.

Yet, Maximilian was too ineffective to accomplish anything substantial on his own. His primary interest seems to have been the trappings of royalty: planning and conducting banquets, balls, luncheons, and other ceremonial pastimes.

Worse for Maximilian, distant events beyond his control worked against him. Even as Maximilian had landed in his new country, far to the north, the Federal Armies under Generals Grant and Sherman had begun their campaigns that would eventually result in the destruction of the Confederacy. With the American Civil War ended a year later, the U.S. was in a position to enforce the Monroe Doctrine that the French had so brazenly violated, and the American government placed great pressure on Napoleon III to quit Mexico.

To back up its demands, the United States sent an army under General Sheridan to the Mexican border.

In France, the Mexican venture had become increasingly unpopular, as the losses mounted with none of the promised gains being realized. Across the border, the rising German state of Prus-

sia embarked on a series of successful wars against its neighbors, clearly threatening France at the same time that so many French troops were tied down across the ocean in Mexico. All of these factors convinced Napoleon III to abandon his Mexican empire, and he ordered his army home.

Napoleon III rationalized this betrayal by blaming Maximilian and the French commander for the failure to completely subdue Mexico.

Due to his abandonment by Napoleon III, Maximilian confronted a dilemma. He could either retreat with the French, or face the resistance on his own. At this critical juncture, typical of his vacillating nature and unrealistic perspective, Maximilian spent six weeks collecting butterfly specimens.

Maximilian finally decided to remain in Mexico, and rally the conservative forces under his command. Shortly after the French withdrawal, Maximilian and his followers were surrounded by the forces of the Mexican Republic, who outnumbered them by over four-to-one.

After a brief siege, the imperial forces surrendered. Maximilian and his Generals were court-martialled and executed by firing squad.

Napoleon III's treacherous behavior was rewarded within a few years. With his rule increasingly unpopular at home, he unwisely provoked the powerful Prussian state to the east. In a war that lasted less than three months, the Prussian Army invaded France, deposed Napoleon III, and proclaimed a greater German empire that included several former provinces of France. The exiled emperor died in England a few years later.

Upon reestablishing his government in Mexico City, Juarez dealt leniently with those who had revolted against the lawful government, allowing his execution of Maximilian and the rebel Generals to be the example for foreign adventurers and traitors. Juarez continued his program of reform, and was reelected President of Mexico for several more terms. He died suddenly in office in 1872, having left an indelible and mostly positive legacy to his country.

Juarez is celebrated as one of Mexico's greatest national heroes, and as a champion of free people everywhere.

In contrast, Louis Napoleon and Maximilian were merely dabblers in social reform. They were never more than aristocrats trapped in the beliefs and practices of the past, unqualified for the positions they held, artifacts of an age that was already in its twi-

The March 2006 issue will be the last one I will be preparing and mailing. I have not heard anyone saying they will take over the task. It is difficult to get folks to understand that it takes a bit of help to learn the forms and the process. The process takes only a about an hour to put on all of the labels and sort the newsletters into the mailing containers. I fill out the form on line via the USPS service using the Forms Wizard. This is simply my choice because hand writing forms seems too time consuming. There is a running total form that must also be filled out but I created an Excel version and it calculates the total number of newsletters mailed for me. To answer the usual questions:

Do we have to use the printer in Merritt Island? Not really – whatever means of getting the newsletter printed is up to the editor and the circulation chair. Be forewarned that the current printer still gives us the best price – including getting the two staples per issue – we do not have to fold and staple any more. The treasurer can tell you the monthly cost of printing for comparison purposes.

Do we have to use the Post Office in Cocoa? -- Maybe -- Not all branch post offices handle Business Class (Bulk rate) mail. We have paid for several months at this facility. The fee paid in advance is not transferable. When the current postage runs out it is possible to move to another post office that handles business class mail or an alternate means of fulfilling the By-laws requirement of delivering an issue to every member, every month can be done by the Editor and the circulation chair.

Why can't I continue in the position of circulation chair? I will no longer be a member of Mensa (not just of SCAM) as of March 31, 2006. I have no intention of renewing my membership.

Anyone wanting the job needs to let Mike Moakley know as soon as possible.

FALLEN EMPIRES-2, Continued.

(Continued from page 20)

light by the mid-19th century.

This description of events from long ago is not intended (and should not be taken) as an exact analogy for any contemporary events. This is, however, a timeless lesson that the truth, regardless of distortions, ultimately survives, so long as there are people who care about the truth.

ften I have been told every cloud has a silver lining. So long as Bush II and his cronies remain in power, however horrible the regime, I suspect I shall never suffer from Writer's Block. When I least expect it, some issue surfaces as fodder for this column. Such is the case here when recently, I came across one of those perpetually forwarded e-mails that fill up our mailboxes.

This one was dubbed the "Bill of Non-Rights" allegedly written by a State Representative in Georgia, one Mitchell Aye. The first thing I wanted to know, naturally, was, were these words actually written by Rep. Aye? In my search, I discovered that the article was originally posted to a conservative site known as FreeRepublic.com, and was titled, "Open Letter to Deadweights – From Sensible People". According to the site's home page, "Free Republic is the premier online gathering place for independent, grass-roots conservatism on the web. We're working to roll back decades of governmental largesse, to root out political fraud and corruption, and to champion causes which further conservative causes in America." – www.freerepublic.com/home.htm

Then I did a Google search for Mitchell Aye from Georgia hoping to find a legislative site. Instead, I found his name and the "Bill of Non-Rights" immediately, including one site calling the item an urban legend. I also saw at one point attribution to a Mitchell Kaye. Hmm... Then I went to the State of Georgia's official website and brought up the name of all of Georgia's current legislators – I found no Mitchell Aye (or Kaye). So much for authenticity!

Even so, the "Open Letter" does have some value. In terms of the general public, conservatives and liberals do appear to have one opinion in common: both contend that the working class is getting screwed. We do differ on the question of who is doing the screwing. The "Open Letter" reflects the conservative view on this particular question.

Below, in italics, is the "Open Letter" as it appears in FreeRepublic.com, together with my comments:

"We the sensible people of the United States, in an attempt to help everyone get along, restore some semblance of justice, avoid more riots, keep our nation safe, promote positive behavior, and secure the blessings of debt free liberty to ourselves and our great-great-great-grandchildren, hereby try one more time to ordain and establish some common sense guidelines for the terminally whiny, guilt ridden,

delusional, and other liberal bed-wetters."

Apparently, the writer intended to guide liberals, of which I am one. But, *bed-wetters*??? I cannot remember a time personally when I had a bed-wetting problem. Or perhaps this was intended for *only* those liberals who wet their beds...but I guess we should just continue on.

"We hold these truths to be self evident: that a whole lot of people are confused by the Bill of Rights and are so dim they require a Bill of NON-Rights."

OK, we started that already with the Patriot Act. I'm still trying to find out if I'm on the Homeland Security "Hit List" at my library.

"ARTICLE I: You do not have the right to a new car, big screen TV, or any other form of wealth. More power to you if you can legally acquire them, but no one is guaranteeing anything."

Fair enough. Since no one promises us anything, should we not also live within our means? Let us go a step farther: do away with living on credit altogether, except for the home and the car, both typically long-term loans secured by collateral. However, I suspect if we did this, we would find out very quickly what shape our economy is really in. If we cannot handle that, at the very least, let's stop the practice of "subprime lending." Credit should be offered at the same terms to all customers regardless of credit rating. If an applicant is too risky, the lender can always say "no."

"ARTICLE II: You do not have the right to never be offended. This country is based on freedom, and that means freedom for everyone - not just you! You may leave the room, turn the channel, express a different opinion, etc.; but the world is full of idiots, and probably always will be."

I agree. However, please don't be offended when I protest the charlatans on the Religious Right imposing their misguided "values" on the rest of us. The God I believe in is all-powerful; He does not need cheerleaders or a goon squad to carry out His mission. Yes, the world *is* full of idiots. Is it too offensive to suggest that those in the Religious Right might want to *read* their Bibles instead of thumping them?

"ARTICLE III: You do not have the right to be free from harm. If you stick a screwdriver in your eye, learn to be more careful, do not expect the tool manufacturer to make you and all your relatives independently wealthy."

This smells suspiciously like Tort Reform, the principle where peo-

ple are responsible for their actions, but large companies are not. I challenge anyone reading this to show me a verifiable case where anyone has become independently wealthy by successfully holding a manufacturer legally liable for something that was the plaintiff's fault. Remember, the final outcome of the case is what matters. Any takers? I'll publish the results in a future column.

"ARTICLE IV: You do not have the right to free food and housing. Americans are the most charitable people to be found and will gladly help anyone in need, but we are quickly growing weary of subsidizing generation after generation of professional couch potatoes who achieve nothing more than the creation of another generation of professional couch potatoes."

"ARTICLE V: You do not have the right to free health care. That would be nice, but from the looks of public housing, we're just not interested in public health care."

True, we are not entitled to these things free of charge. Public services are NOT free, as they are paid for by OUR tax dollars. As for health care, we already have public programs in place. I wonder how many conservatives who have already reached retirement age will give up their Medicare or Social Security. Moreover, public health care can hardly be worse than some of our HMOs (or no health care at all). The real "professional couch potatoes" are predatory corporations who add no value to their communities, but who drain our tax revenues, such as Wal-Mart, which has over 12,000 employees in Florida alone who must use Medicaid for their health care needs. We are effectively subsidizing their payroll.

"ARTICLE VI: You do not have the right to physically harm other people. If you kidnap, rape, intentionally maim, or kill someone, don't be surprised if the rest of us want to see your rear fry in the electric chair."

No one disputes the need to punish violent criminals. The death penalty, however, is another matter. As Wilton Dedge can readily attest to, sometimes the wrong person is convicted. Suppose Dedge had been put to death for his rape conviction? Oops...?

"ARTICLE VII: You do not have the right to the possessions of others. If you rob, cheat, loot, or coerce away the goods or services of other citizens, don't be surprised if the rest of us get together and lock you away in a place where you still won't have the right to a big screen color TV or a life of leisure."

Would this include predatory lenders and other "poverty industry" businesses as well?

“ARTICLE VIII: You do not have the right to a job. All of us sure want you to have a job, and will gladly help you along in hard times, but we expect you to take advantage of the opportunities of education and vocational training laid before you to make yourself useful.”

Does this entitle us to the training, even if we cannot afford it? Or is this another “unfunded mandate”?

“ARTICLE IX: You do not have the right to happiness. Being an American means that you have the right to PURSUE happiness which, by the way, is a lot easier if you are unencumbered by an over abundance of idiotic laws created by those of you who were confused by the Bill of Rights.”

One such idiotic law is the one designating corporations as “persons”. Artificial entities should NOT have rights, as their leaders already have them.

“ARTICLE X: This is an English speaking country. We don't care where you are from, English is our language. Learn it or go back to wherever you came from!”

Many citizens born here do not speak English. Where should they go? Perhaps we need more in our education budget.

(lastly....)

“ARTICLE XI: You do not have the right to change our country's history or heritage. This country was founded on the belief in one true God. And yet, you are given the freedom to believe in any religion, any faith, or no faith at all; with no fear of persecution. The phrase IN GOD WE TRUST is part of our heritage and history and if you are uncomfortable with it, TOUGH!!!!”

True, no one has the right to change our country's history, but we DO have an obligation to tell the truth. Did our ancestors “discover” America? Hint: Other people were already here. What does the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution actually say? Another hint: It deals with the “religion question.” Bonus question: When and how did “In God We Trust” become our “national motto”? One might do well to learn our history before whining that others are trying to “change” it.

Reprinted from FreeRepublic.com. It can be accessed from the following Web address: www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1488077/post

February - the shortest month - February 2 is Groundhog Day,

February 14 is Valentine's Day, but even of more interest is that February 1 is the day that Willie Wonka took the children on the tour of the Chocolate Factory! And now back to Mensa . . . February is also the month of ValenTime, the wonderful little RG in the Panhandle, February 10-12. See you in Destin!

It is finally 2006, and the World Gathering is only seven months away. As of the end of 2005, there were already more than 900 people registered for the WG. Are you registered yet? And if you wish to be part of the WG, have you signed up as a volunteer? It is not too late, you know. Find out more at WG06.us.mensa.org.

Some of the more recent member benefits available include both National and Alamo Car Rental companies offering Mensans unlimited mileage and year-round discounts. Find out more details (and the code to use) on the National website. The most recent member benefit involves the opportunity for you to research, design, and reserve vacation travel exclusively through http://mensa.virtuocard.com. Through this easy-to-use website, you will be able to book with some of the best travel companies in the world, and because of the American Mensa membership, you will receive discounts and added value.

The Mensa Discussion Forums are up and running. On the National website (us.mensa.org), go to the members section. Be prepared to enter your member number and password, then click on "discussion forums". *WARNING*: Use of the forums can be addictive and consume tremendous amounts of time!

By next month, I hope to be able to report that we have a Region 10 e-list up and running. This will be an opportunity for all of you to keep in touch with each other - and with me. I do want to know your opinions. In the meantime, the discussion forums give you an opportunity to open up topics for discussion and express your opinion on that topic or any other already open. So let's look for each other, on the web, at the RG, or at the WG. See you there!

Maggie Truelove, RVC 10
3333 Honeysuckle Lane
Orlando, Florida
407-855-9078

rvc10@cfl.rr.com or ***rvc10@us.mensa.org***

The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Saturday, January 7, 2006. The meeting was called to order at 4:41 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

Members present: George Patterson, Joe Smith and Bud Long. Cliff Miller and Thomas Wheat were unable to attend.

Welcome Guests: None.

Minutes as published in the January 2006 SCAM are approved unanimously.

Officer Reports:

LocSec: George reported that we had three candidates for the Audit Committee and one for the NomElCom. (see below) The full NomElCom should have been put in place at this meeting or sooner. A pitch for members to run for the ExComm from last year's Chair, Clara Woodall-Moran, will appear in the February SCAM. (this issue)

Testing: Helen Lee Moore (Proctor Coordinator) reported via phone that no candidates appeared for a scheduled December test.

Editor: Mike Moakley reported by phone that he was in need of a new assembly/circulation manager. This task involves picking up the SCAM at the printer, affixing address labels and delivering to the P.O. About two to three hours work a month. Volunteer needed by April 1. (no kidding)

Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: George moved that we appoint Doug Starke, Ellen Paul, and Wynn Rostek as the Audit Committee. Approved unanimously. George moved that we appoint Mike Moakley to the NomElCom. Approved unanimously.

George moved that we "officially" cancel the 2006 RG so as to end the suspense and hand wringing. Seconded by Joe. Approved unanimously. Joe moved and Bud seconded that George Patterson be appointed 2008 RG Chairman. Approved unanimously. It was noted that there was a need to research the membership interest in a 2008 RG, locate a new venue for same, assuming an RG is desired, and do some preliminary planning. This position is intended as a "preRG" chair with an actual RG chair being appointed, hopefully, in the summer of 2007.

Joe moved to adjourn at 4:47 pm, passed by unanimous vote. The next meeting of the ExComm is scheduled for Saturday, **February 4, at 4:00 pm at George Patterson's house, 301 Sand Pine Road, Indialantic.**