

The

SCAM

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2007

Happy New Year!



SPACE COAST AREA MENSA



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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.

Page Three

Mike Moakley, Editor

Now, that's what I'm talkin' about! This bit of colloquialism best describes this month's issue. Several of you have heeded my call. I guess the December issue illustrated the worn-out adage that "a picture is worth a thousand words". On hearing this statement from me many years ago (yes, in a former life, I could draw pictures), one of my English teachers replied, "I prefer the words."

Of course, anyone wishing to can contribute artwork, especially for future covers. Anyone so inclined should contact me for technical details, as there are limits as to what will reproduce well.

Regrettably, one of this month's columns will disappear after this issue. Art Belefant, who has written for *The SCAM* for over 14 years, will discontinue his columns for health reasons. Be sure to read his column for this month—it is well worth the read.

This month, you will see some new names. Two or three, I believe, will be contributing a series to appear each month. They are also on a variety of topics. I hope you enjoy them.

I caution you, however, not to be deceived by the fullness of this issue. It does NOT mean there is no further need for contributions. Quite the contrary. There is always a need for new material. Moreover, the only real constant in this world is *change*. The fact that we are carrying a regular feature is no guarantee the feature will continue. People move in or out, they join and leave our group. Some feel the need to be published, while others tire of continuing a column. Much of this has happened over the last three years I have edited *The SCAM*; I have no reason to believe this direction will change. So, as I've stated too many times before, it is up to *you* to continue *The SCAM* as a quality publication.

***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.

In the last issue of SCAM our editor, Mike Moakley, decried the fact that he had no locally written articles for that issue. Unfortunately, I did not produce one, for which I am sorry.

It has been over fourteen years that I have been writing monthly articles for SCAM. Last month was the first time that I missed an issue. In September I went into the hospital for a relatively minor surgery. Because of post-operative complications I spent three months in the hospital recovering. I finally left the hospital on Thanksgiving weekend. During my hospital stay I was unable to write any thing. Your editor had several articles of mine in store which he used, but now there are no more.

I am happy to report that I am recovering from the post-operative complications but I am still weak and tire easily; therefore I am discontinuing my monthly submissions to SCAM. It has been a long tenure but I cannot now produce any more.

I did not plan on writing a monthly article, and certainly I did not plan on writing them for over fourteen years. It all began in the summer of 1992 when I was disgruntled at our coming national elections. I wrote an essay outlining a proposed change in our voting system that would better reflect the opinions of the electorate. I did not expect that any change would come about because of my suggestion, but I felt that I needed a larger audience for my ideas than the limited number of friends that I could directly communicate them to.

I submitted my article to SCAM and to my delight it was published in the August 1992 issue. After that issue was published I was approached by the then editor, Harvey Newstrom, to write further for SCAM. At first I demurred, not being sure of what I could write about and how long I could do it.

After some prodding, I agreed to try if Harvey would allow me to write about food. I was not exactly a novice to food writing. Many years ago I was the restaurant reviewer and food columnist for the Tokyo Asahi Evening News. Also, I had published a book, not a cook book but a book about international food, which is now being revised for a second edition, and two cookbooks, *A Greek Dinner* and *A Japanese Dinner*, on audio tape.

I knew that I could write one or two articles easily but I was apprehensive if I could find subject matter to cover a year's worth of articles. The first article appeared in the October 1992 issue of

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SCAM. In my haste to get my first article out and to be sure that it was of good quality, I cannibalized an article that I had written for the Asahi Evening News years before. From then on I wrote as the ideas appeared to me.

I need not have worried about inspiration. Ideas for articles came to me from everywhere. Sometimes they were suggested by readers, sometimes from dinners I have eaten, current events, situations I had encountered, or trips I had taken. I did not seem to dry up for any extended period of time. I sometimes have two or more articles in the editor's hands at any given time.

There are two reasons for this. Given an idea, it may sit in the back of my head for months before it gels into something that I can write about. I don't know how this works, but even ideas that I give myself sometimes just toddle around my brain, picking up lint here and there, until one day I start writing. The other reason is that I write when I feel like it. I do not follow a schedule. Therefore the editor usually had two or three articles of mine on hand at all times. It is his choice as to when to publish them.

I will not apologize for expanding my mandate to write about travel, for most of my travel is food oriented, or toilets, for what goes in must come out. In fact, my articles about toilets seem to be some of the best received; at least they engender the most commentary.

Although I will not write any more articles on anything like a regular basis, I will be happy to answer any questions or provide my opinion about any issue that the readers of SCAM care to pose to me.

I have enjoyed writing the articles for SCAM. It has been far more a pleasure than a burden, and I learned much in those endeavors. In summary, I would like to thank my readers who have supported my efforts, read my articles, discussed the subject matter, and given me ideas.

Like an actor, who is nothing without an audience, a writer is nothing without readers. I thank you.

Arthur Belefant.

First things first. I like to sew. In fact, I make some of my own clothes. But this does NOT, under any circumstances, mean that I have a “good personality.”

Just so we're straight. That said, I'm having a bit of trouble with my sewing machine.

It's nothing fancy - just a Kenmore workhorse, on a rolling cart home made out of plywood, plumbing pipes, and casters. It's been a trusty companion for many years, ever since my husband purchased it in order to clean up my vocabulary (my last sewing machine was a bit temperamental; may it and it's schizophrenic tension knob rot in hell.)

The trouble actually has nothing to do with the huge dent evident in its side, since my daughter decided to perform a gravity experiment on a finely tuned piece of machinery. No, in that case I just bent back the offended parts as best I could, and oiled it up to show it I was truly sorry (these things are important with sewing machines. No one knows why.) It's been stitching away fairly reliably (if a little more loudly) ever since.

No, the trouble I'm having is related to some high-pitched inaudible, odorless, colorless emission that causes every living household inhabitant to gather in the room in which it is operating.

For a long time, I kept the machine rolled away in the coat closet, for easy access from the kitchen/family room area. During that time, I didn't notice the phenomenon, since everybody hangs around in the kitchen anyway, in case cake should suddenly make an appearance. I accepted the crowding issue as just a side effect of my ill-conceived (though entirely logical) sewing strategy: to collocate with the largest horizontal layout and cutting surfaces.

But I had increasing issues with pins. Pins are a major hazard of sewing, unless you happen to live alone in a concrete bunker. As it stands, there are two kids, two adults, a dog, a cat, and four hermit crabs in my house, each trying to cause serious personal injury by impaling body parts on stray pins.

In order to avoid blowing my clothes savings on visits to the emergency room, I was forced to color code and number my pins, and check them out of the pin vault individually. I modeled this process after the procedure by which one borrows a towel at a resort pool - including the major credit card and “mother's maiden name” part. You just can't be too careful.

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Unfortunately, it was taking me months to complete even the simplest projects, just on the pin paperwork. So I was forced to consider an alternative sewing venue. A carpeted room was out of the question (carpet = pin minefield) so I ended up in, well, my bathroom. Sure, it's the size of a phone booth. But if I set up the ironing board in the bathtub, it works. And there's even a convenient, um, seat!

This is when I noticed the aforementioned problem of the strange attractive quality my machine seems to possess.

Now I know you're going to point out that it may not be the sewing machine. The bathroom itself could account for this anomaly - as any mother knows (just try to pass a quiet few minutes in there, and see what happens).

But that would only account for the presence of two children. What of the husband and pets? The power of the attraction simply cannot be explained by the bathroom alone. It must be the sewing machine!

As supporting evidence, I present an additional behavioral aberration associated with said machine. The very act of pressing the pedal (which sends the needle into movement) causes one of the attending creatures to ask a question.

"Mom, how is my tongue attached to my head?"

Whereupon, based on the maternal patience clause, I must suspend sewing long enough to answer, "Zig-zag stitch, honey."

I've timed it. The migration to the bathroom takes roughly 12 seconds. A little longer if the "sewing machine waves" have to permeate brick siding. Where is Marlin Perkins when you need him?

I'm thinking of taking the machine to the shop, to see if I can get it looked at by a qualified specialist (exorcist?) But I'm waiting for interest rates to drop some more, because you know what those guys charge.

In the meantime, I've taken to barricading the door with the pile of folded laundry that hasn't made it back into the drawers yet. If that doesn't do the trick, I may have to resort to wielding my pins irresponsibly.

I told you I didn't have a good personality.

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The Short of It:

The SCRABBLE® Brand Crossword Game allows words from two to fifteen letters in length. The fourth edition of The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary (OSPD4) lists 101 playable two-letter words, from AA (rough, cindery lava) to ZA (a pizza). ZA is a recent addition, along with along with FE (a Hebrew letter), KI (the vital force in Chinese thought), OI (oy), and QI (the vital force that in Chinese thought is inherent in all things).

Since none of the first three editions of OSPD contained two-letter words using Q or Z, some blocking strategies that SCRABBLE® players used are now invalid. It is now less safe to play QUART or ZOO next to a row or column containing triple-word scores: An I understand the Q or an A to the right of the Z could lead to a big play. Big plays can also occur if a triple-letter-score is next to an I or an A: Q and Z are each 10-point letters, so playing QI or ZA in two directions with those letters on the TLS is worth more than 60 points!

Even two-letter words containing letters of lesser value are important. Suppose your opponent opens the game with STHENIA (excessive energy). That could be worth as much as 78 points (four-point H on the double-letter-score, six one-point letters, double-word-score for playing through the center star, and the 50-point bonus for using all seven letters). If your rack is made up of AAEINNO, you might be tempted to exchange all your tiles and hope for a Q or Z -- until you remember that AEONIAN (an alternate spelling of EONIAN, which means “everlasting”) is good. Played directly above STHENIA, you also get points for AS, ET (a past tense of eat -- sorry, grammarians!), OH, NE (born with the name of), IN, AI (a three-toed sloth), and NA (no; not):

AEONIAN
STHENIA

Now you are ahead with 79 points!

Next month: *The Long of It*

....and I am not being a pessimist, just realistic.

Way back long before you were born there was something referred to today as The Depression. Everyone (almost everyone) got suddenly poor. Business came to a halt and there were few jobs to be had. That recession (that's what they will call it today) was caused by the crash in the stock market.

Today (or very soon) it is going to be blamed on the collapse of the housing market. The talking heads and cheerleaders will tell this is a slowdown and it will pick up in a short period of time. The lowering of interest rates will make financing easy and mortgage rates very low which will bring the buyers out of their holes. They won't be able to resist the wonderful deals.

It seems our economists have missed some very obvious statistics available from the U.S. government. The Census Bureau has most of them. An interesting article by Jas Jain on the Internet site SAFE HAVEN exposes numbers that are more than scary. His conclusion is there are twice as many units available as there are families to occupy them.

At the end of 2001 there were 119,116,000 housing units (houses and condos) and at the end of the second quarter of 2006 it had increased to 125,800,000 or an increase of 6,684,000. Don't let these numbers bother you as they are very simple.

The number of occupied houses in 2001 was 106,261,000. The difference is vacancies. At the end of the Q2 2006, 109,450,000 were occupied. That's an increase of only 3,189,000. OK, now deduct the new number occupied from the net change in homes built and it comes to 3,495,000 with vacancies running close to 2.6 million. Units occupied are family units which might be one person or 10 people. Divide 3.5 million by 5 years and you will immediately see that we have been building 700,000 more units than family units have been created.

Currently 69% of American own their home or at least share it with the mortgage company. That figures almost everyone above the poverty line who can qualify has bought and mortgage qualifications are becoming more stringent. Now the investors who have been flipping houses have quit buying and are waiting for the housing market to "come back". It looks like a long wait.

Home construction continues even though there are no buyers

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A Mensan in the Workplace?

Are you the Mensan at work? Do you work with other Mensans...or...are you the only one? If the latter is true, do your coworkers know you're in Mensa? What about your boss? What are your impressions and experiences at work? Do you have a leadership position? Do you serve in any kind of "support" (formal or informal) role? Does your status as a Mensan have a positive or negative impact on your work relationships? Finally, if preparing a resume, would you include your Mensa membership as an item (or would you state that you qualified to join Mensa)? Why or why not? Let's hear from *you*.

THE ALCHEMIST

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with the supply becoming more and more. The bust of the housing bubble can easily cause the next Depression because 30% of the GDP is home construction. The stock market will collapse and jobs will become scarce. Seventy percent of our economy is based upon consumer spending. When the kids lose their job they will be moving back home with the old folks whose house is paid for leaving their place as another vacancy. Mr. Jain is looking at 20,000,000 vacancies.

What will that \$300,000 house of today be worth a few years from now?

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 2007 All rights reserved.

Part I - Party

We are going to have a picnic. On either April 14, the Saturday after Easter Sunday, or the following Saturday, April 21. The location -- probably Paradise Park, on A1A, in Indialantic. This is a repeat of info in the ExComm minutes, but people tell me that no one reads the minutes. It will feature burgers and dogs and anything else you might want to bring. Any uncertainty in the details will be resolved and presented in a full page ad in the February SCAM. Yes, I think we need a full page ad in order to reacquaint the membership with the idea of socializing amongst themselves. For this event, which is sponsored by the ExComm, we could use a few volunteers. If we don't get them, the ExComm members will do the job, but hey - let's get a little participation. We could use an overall coordinator - a job which involves writing things down and calling people, someone to bring the drinks, ice, coolers, someone to bring the solid food, and someone to bring the accoutrements (as Terry so nicely put it) such as charcoal, plates, forks, cards, board games, and so forth. The probably Paradise Park venue sports a nice pavilion with seating for 50 and we really ought to be able to come up with a crowd of about that size. Children invited, of course. There will be a modest fee and a contribution from the treasury to fund the event. Email me at George3141@cfl.rr.com and tell me you think this is a great idea and that you might actually attend.

Part II - General pitch for ongoing events

The last Saturday of each month on our calendar features S.N. O.R.T. In olden times, this event was held after putting the latest issue of SCAM to bed. It stands for Saturday Night Of the Round Table, or some such. Nowadays, with computers, Mike handles the task single-handedly and ships the copy off to the printer. Elaine picks up the printed SCAM, adds the mailing labels and takes them to the Post Office. The rest of us continue to celebrate the event at Miyako's Japanese restaurant, because it's a nice, inexpensive place to have dinner. The Schindlers host the event and the Pattersons, Belefants and Dana Stetser generally show up. We used to attend 15 or 20 strong. Let's get some more folks out for the fine food they offer. I don't say fine DINING because Miyakos is not a particularly elegant restaurant, but the sushi, sashimi, tempura,

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teriyaki and such are really quite good. A couple of unfamiliar faces at the event would really be appreciated and they would appreciate it too.

Another regular item on the calendar is C.A.B.A.G.E. I forget what this stands for but I think it tells you at our website. It does. I just looked it up. It's Coffee And Books And Games Everyone. Currently the game is Hand and Foot, a glorified Canasta game. It's on the calendar for every Monday night (yes, every Monday night) and is well attended. Attendance over the past few months has run from six to fourteen. Like Miyako's, the game is part of it and the socializing is the other part. Now what are some of the things that seem to have gotten lost over the last couple of seasons.

Dining out in general is way down. I see the calendars from the other Florida chapters and they are loaded with dining events. Inelegantly call PIG SIGs in some cases. Fine dining in others. All that is required to get them on the calendar is for someone to decide to host an event at their favorite (or even second favorite) restaurant, phone it in to our calendar coordinator, let the restaurant know a slightly indeterminate number of people are planning to show up and show up themselves. In some cases, RSVPs might be requested if the restaurant really needs to know in advance. You know the drill. The only reason this takes a tidbit more than a modicum of planning is because our SCAM and calendar go to press on the 10th of the month and show up in the mail near the end. To announce events for the following month, the events need to be planned a month in advance. While I have some trouble planning my life that far ahead, I'm sure there are some Mensans out there who are up to it. In a similar vein, a games night every month shouldn't be that hard to manage. It take six people willing to host twice a year, or 12 to do it once a year, or four to do it ... oh, you do the math.

Nuff said. I, for one, plan to host a night at the ballpark, comes baseball season. This despite my belief that out of our 200 odd members, there is, perhaps, one Manatee fan. But going to the ballpark, eating a \$3 hotdog, and watching the players run around for a couple of hours is a pleasant way to spend an evening - really.

SCAM Calendar of Events for January 2007

27th - 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.*

Any Date—Any Time

YOUR EVENT HERE

Why not host that Mensa event you always wanted? It may be easier than you think...

Contact: *Doug Starke, your Calendar Coordinator*

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".

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Welcome to SCAM and Mensa

George Mihailoff III
Lee Jennings

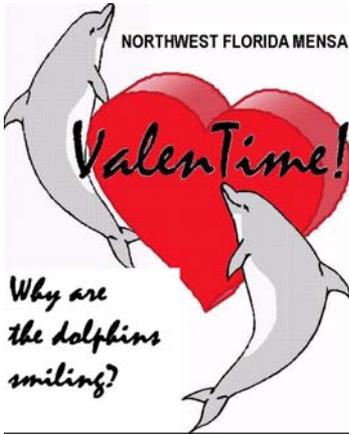
Welcome Back

David Raeman
Don King

JANUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>2nd</i>	Rose Marie Martinie	<i>14th</i>	William Gray
<i>10th</i>	Dennis Logan	<i>21st</i>	Catherine Anderson
<i>14th</i>	Lee McLamb	<i>31st</i>	Joanne Ricker-
<i>14th</i>	Barry Signorelli		Abowitt
<i>14th</i>	Gary Tower		

Note: If your birthday is not listed, and you want it to be, please let us know.



February 9-11, 2007

At the Holiday Inn, 10 Hwy 98 East, Destin, FL.

A great program is shaping up - pack your most outrageous t-shirt for the Wit T-shirt Contest, your pirate costume, and your GPS - or just come on down and we'll outfit you! All your favorite events are scheduled along with some new treats, and the best RG cuisine anywhere.

Registration is \$40 per person if paid by Feb 1, \$45 per person at the door, or \$20 per person for Friday night, \$35 for Saturday, and \$10 for Sunday. Please make checks payable to Northwest Florida Mensa.

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Phone _____ **Email:** _____

Please mail this form to: Registrar — ValenTime,
616 Overbrook Drive, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547-3528;
Contact: *John Mochan - (850)-585-3194, jmochan@cox.net*

Room rates are approximately \$75—\$108 depending on Gulf view, double occupancy, add \$10 per extra person. Call the hotel at 877-837-6181 or 850-837-6181 and tell them you are with the Mensa group.

Visit us at: nwflorida.us.mensa.org

I have been a Mensan for several years. My wife is not, although she is certainly intelligent enough to qualify (like many people, she does not do well on tests). As far as I know, there are no other registered Mensans in my relative pool. So, I do not know if what I am about to speak about is that original or not among Mensans in other families.

I am often quizzed by my wife, her mother, my brother's family, et. al. about a multitude of topics. Even though my wife and others have access to laptops and computers at work or home where they can "Google" to their hearts content, they prefer to challenge me with some arcane item they have recently read, seen on TV, heard on the radio or experienced in some fashion. They say it is easier to just ask me and have the fun of trying to stump me and say, "Hmm, and you are in Mensa, eh?"

Of course, it does my little ego good to be able to field these questions. They tell me they later verify them from a more reputable source (if it is a question within the realm of recorded history) and find I am usually correct. They keep no records to verify this or provide any statistics, so I will believe them for now. I do get to play Alex Trebek and say, "The answer is..." quite often and it is fun to be considered a source of knowledge like a walking encyclopedia that people can depend on to help them with an exasperating question.

But my wife has another twist on the event. Perhaps others have experienced the approach as well, but most just take it for granted that all families experience the same type of questioning. She will ask about a person, place, or thing and:

- (1) Provide clues, but she is not sure if they are correct;
- (2) When asked questions about the topic will provide answers like "I do not know" or "maybe";
- (3) Will tie these clues into other topics which may or may not have relevance;
- (4) Maybe mix up the pronunciation of a word or give an incorrect reference or an incorrect numerical clue;
- (5) Mention I should be aware of this person, place, thing, or event so why can I not answer her;
- (6) Mentions she has tried to find out the answer in the usual sources and discovered nothing at this point.

Now most families like to play "Twenty Questions", but I think they usually do not have the previous conditions as rules to play the

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game. Also, since the originator of the question does not have the foggiest idea if your answer is correct, it still has to be verified (usually by you doing the research to vindicate your answer). I have to admit that it does make for a Poirot experience of exercising the little grey cells. Being given false information, misleading facts, red herring leads, and the pressure of someone knowing you are the local Mensa representative and HAVE to be able to answer in order to hold your head up again in family gatherings has made for some entertaining moments.

In any case, I think my wife gets a chuckle out of throwing these challenges at me. Maybe she knows the answers to the questions already, and just likes to see what I do. Or maybe she believes I need my self-esteem either raised or lowered at the given moment.

Sometimes, since I know she does like testing, maybe she is just trying to convince me I need to take those Mensa tests again.

A TIDBIT FROM THE INTERNET

Author Unknown

An honest man was being tailgated by a stressed out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman hit the roof, and the horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer.

The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him.

"I noticed the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Follow Me to Sunday-School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally... I assumed you had stolen the car."

In 1992 I voted for Ross Perot over Bush (Sr.) or Clinton despite the fact that he had temporarily abandoned the campaign (and, perhaps, his own sanity) claiming that the Republicans had been trying to disrupt his daughter's wedding. I voted for him again in 1996, preferring to "waste" my vote rather than pick the lesser of the Clinton or Dole evils. Although I knew that Perot didn't have the proverbial snowball's chance, I had to vote my conscience so that I could face myself in the mirror.

The Democrats claim that the Republicans just want to help their fat cat friends. The Republicans whine that the Democrats are going to sell the country short with welfare programs. The simple truth is that there is really very little difference between the two: They are both basically opposite-side pockets of Big Business's suit.

Do you know the purpose of our elected representatives in Washington, D.C.? You... over there in the orange taffeta jumpsuit, what do you think? "To advocate the best interests of their constituents," you say? No.

How about you, with the three-legged llama, what do you think? "To safeguard our country and preserve our freedom?" Nope, not even close.

Okay, last chance, you... in the back, holding the "What, Me Worry?" sign? "To get re-elected." Bingo! A winner! Yep, our senators and congressmen will do and say anything they have to in order to make sure that they will get your vote in the next election. That's their primary mission. And in order to achieve that goal, they -- both Republican and Democrat -- will gladly sell out to whomever will finance their campaigns with substantial donations.

The simple truth of the matter is that we will never see any real positive change in this country until we oust the "professional politicians" and begin to replace them with people whose intention is to represent the best interests of our citizens and truly serve as our representatives. I don't see the current batch of bums in Washington qualifying against that standard.

So, I took the first step. I considered myself an Independent who voted my conscience regardless of party affiliation, but had registered as a Democrat because that way I could vote in a primary, plus I tend to lean more Democratic than Republican. But no more. Let's be honest: They're both liars and ne'er-do-wells. So, now I'm a registered Libertarian and I'm going to try my best to actually get an In-

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before we return to the membership level of March 31. The good news is that in 2006 the membership increases were such that we bypassed the March 31 numbers nearly 3 months sooner than usual. Evidently 2006 was a very good year! Was this due to the World Gathering and its publicity? Was this due to the excellent efforts of the proctors around the country? I don't know, but it is good to know that Mensa is alive and well and kicking!

Maggie Truelove

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ExComm Meeting Minutes*Continued*

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New Business: After the above discussion, Terry moved that we have the party and that George pick the location and the time (4/14 or 4/21) and that we call it The Burger Burn and that we firm up details at the next meeting. Passed unanimously.

The move to adjourn was passed by unanimous vote at 6:14 pm, The next meeting of the ExComm is scheduled for Wednesday, January 3, at 5:30 pm at George Patterson's house, 301 Sand Pine Road, Indialantic. (321-777-3721)

My Summer Vacation:

TIME FOR A CHANGE*Continued*

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dependent Party candidate elected to our Congress. One small step. I don't know for certain that it will make any difference, but I would certainly like to give it a try. I know for sure that as long as we continue down the path we've been taking, the only thing we'll accomplish is more name-calling and finger-pointing.

It's time for a change.

Raising children is hard work, which is one reason why “be a better parent” is a common New Year’s resolution. Raising children is especially hard work when the readily available advice doesn’t fit the situation, which is true for most parents of gifted children. How do a toddler’s parents ask for advice from other playgroup parents when their child is starting to read before some of his peers have started to talk? It is often obvious that a gifted child doesn’t fit the neat milestones given in the standard guidebooks long before parents figure out why they don’t fit.

However, parents find help in many places, not just from other parents and from parenting manuals. Millions of people have read *Little House in the Big Woods*, by Laura Ingalls Wilder. How many children have been allowed to play with their food because Ma allowed Laura to play with hers, just as long as she ate it? How many children have been raised with the motto of television’s Daniel Boone, “Be sure you’re right, then go ahead”?

Here are some quotations to think about. They come from a wide range of sources and contexts, yet they each relate to frequent topics of discussion among the parents of gifted children. May they provide you with ideas and inspiration in the year to come.

“Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannize their teachers.” — Socrates

“All God’s children are not beautiful. Most of God’s children are, in fact, barely presentable.” — Fran Lebowitz

“Love is not only something you feel. It is something you do.” — David Wilkerson

“Never apologize for showing feeling. When you do, you apologize for the truth.” — Benjamin Disraeli

“Parents can only advise their children or point them in the right direction. Ultimately people shape their own characters.” — Anne Frank

“Vocations which we wanted to pursue, but didn’t, bleed, like colors, on the whole of our existence.” — Honore de Balzac

“The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer.” — Henry David Thoreau

“We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that deep inside

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us is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or any experience that reveals the human spirit.” e. e. cummings

“Advice is like snow; the softer it falls, the longer it dwells upon, and the deeper it sinks into the mind.”— Samuel Taylor Coleridge

“People who boast about their IQs are losers.”— Stephen Hawking

“Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death.”— Albert Einstein

“Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen.”— John Steinbeck

“Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous mind.”— Samuel Johnson

“Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.”— John F. Kennedy

“If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn’t thinking.”— George S. Patton

“A person usually has two reasons for doing something: a good reason and the real reason.”— Thomas Carlyle

“Do not wait for ideal circumstances; they will never come; nor for the best opportunities.”— Janet Erskine Stuart

“If a problem has no solution, it may not be a problem, but a fact not to be solved, but to be coped with over time.”— Shimon Peres

“If you don’t have the time to do something right, where are you going to find the time to fix it?”— Stephen King

“Nobody who ever gave his best regretted it.” George Halas

“I love the winning, I can take the losing, but most of all I love to play.”— Boris Becker

“For unflagging interest and enjoyment, a household of children, if things go reasonably well, certainly makes all other forms of success and achievement lose their importance by comparison.”— Theodore Roosevelt

Editor’s Note: This article is adapted from the series “Quotations on Wry”, published in IMprint, the Newsletter of Northern New Jersey Mensa, in January, 2003, 2004, and 2006.



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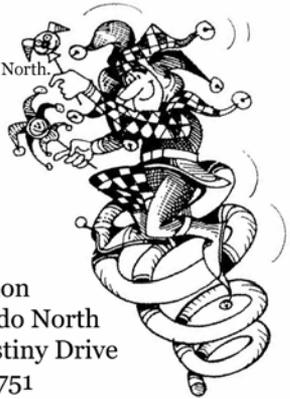
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Well, it does appear there is light at the end of this tunnel. On November 6, the Republicans finally lost their stranglehold on both Houses of the U.S. Congress. While this is unmistakably good news for the majority of us who do not benefit from the Republican plutocracy, this is by no means a total victory for the people. There is much work to be done, much of it to repair the damage inflicted on the ordinary American over the last generation.

While certainly the Democrats have had their part in our current sorry state of affairs, with their return to power, they have promised to return America to the people who work hard to make ours the great nation that we are. Now comes the hard part for the incoming Democratic leadership—to deliver on their promises.

With this in mind, I sent the following letter to our incoming Speaker of the House, Rep. Nancy Pelosi:

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi,
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC

Dear Representative Pelosi:

I would like to extend my congratulations, both for the victory of the Democratic Party in the November election, and for your new position as Speaker of the House. Both are a long time coming.

As a concerned voter with a long history of progressive values, I would like to share with you some of my ideas and concerns. For far too long, we have allowed the Republican regime not only to lead our country in the wrong direction, but to define the debates designed to put us on the defensive on unproductive but emotional issues where rational discussion has become nearly impossible.

As the Democrats assume control of both Houses of the legislative branch, as I understand the operation of government, we get to set the agenda. The Democrats, not the Republicans, need to define the issues to be acted upon by Congress. What should those issues be? Below, I have some ideas, a few of which are detailed below.

First, we need to address the issue of publicly financed campaigns, where all private funding is phased out as quickly as possible. Over the

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last generation, and especially over the last six years, we have become a virtual plutocracy. It has become nearly impossible for representatives to stand up for the ordinary American when his interests conflicted with that of the extremely wealthy.

Second is the Iraq debacle. It is past time to involve the United Nations in its proper role as the international peacekeeper. The U.S. has “gone it alone” for too long in a war that we cannot possibly win. We need to redirect our military to matters of true national security.

Third is the sorry condition of health care in our country. Over the last several years, more and more Americans are uninsured and many others simply cannot afford health care. We need to phase in national health care; this possibly could be done by improving both our current programs, Medicaid and Medicare. We should focus on making both programs more cost-effective, while improving benefits to their respective clients. We could then expand both programs until all Americans are covered for basic medical care.

Fourth, we need to ensure the average full-time worker earns enough to support his or her family. Your initiative to raise the federal minimum wage is a step in the right direction.

These items are by no means a complete list, as space would not permit a complete discussion of all the issues of importance to those of us who truly make America the great country it is. I am also aware that there are limitations to what we can accomplish. For the next two years, George W. Bush is still President; as such, he can veto key legislation that our majority most likely cannot override. Also, for all intents and purposes, we have a “Republican” Supreme Court. Notwithstanding, we should not be discouraged.

We should put forward our proposals anyway. Even if they do not result in an initial legislative victory, we can lay important foundations. Moreover, as we approach future elections, we should use our proposals as the measure upon which we can defeat our opponents in future campaigns. I daresay it would be difficult to explain to constituents why their representative voted against their legitimate interests.

Above all, we should resist the temptation to argue with the Republicans on their emotionally charged bogus issues. If we do not, our control of Congress will be short-lived.

Respectfully,

*Michael Moakley
808 Wisteria Drive
Melbourne, Florida 32901*

And a Happy New Year to you! Did you make any New Year resolutions this year? I have decided to give up on lofty and uplifting resolutions, as I never manage to accomplish them. Instead, I think I will opt for more pleasurable to attain resolutions. Like - I resolve to read more books. And - I resolve to attend more Regional Gatherings. Those will be much easier to achieve.

Speaking of Regional Gatherings, there are two coming up within the next several weeks right here in Florida:

Smarti Gras, hosted by Central Florida Mensa, will be January 26-28, 2007. It will be held at the Sheraton Orlando North, the hotel at the Maitland Blvd. exit from Interstate 4, on the north side of Orlando.

CFM is known for its great programs and excellent hospitality. Details and a registration form are available on the Region 10 website (region10.us.mensa.org then scroll down to “upcoming events”), or you can contact registrar Eddie Truelove at etruelove@cfl.rr.com or 407-855-9078.

ValenTime, hosted by “the little group that could,” Northwest Florida Mensa, will be February 9-11, 2007. It will again be at the Holiday Inn in Destin in the panhandle. This year there will be a wit tee shirt contest, and they say to bring your pirate costume, as well. You can also access information and registration form for this Regional Gathering on the Region 10 website (as above), or contact John Mochan at jmochan@cox.net or 850-585-3194.

These two RGs are an 8 hour drive apart, but I can recommend both of them as a terrific weekend event. Each of these two groups have committees loaded with members who know how to do it right. If you haven't yet been to a Regional Gathering, or haven't been to one in a while, either one of these should be a pleasant experience and provide you with that much needed RG fix. I will be attending both, so SEE YOU THERE!

Last month I mentioned that I was planning to become a life member. Well, I have done so. Now I can paraphrase Scarlett O'Hara - “As God is my witness, I'll never pay dues again!” Every year, enough people don't renew by March 31, that there is a quick drop in membership level on April 1. Some of them simply forgot and eventually do so, but it does take several months

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The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, December 6, 2006. Called to order at 5:47 pm by LocSec George Patterson. Yes, the October meeting was also called to order at 5:47. Just a coincidence.

Members present: George Patterson, Joe Smith, Terry Valek, and Thomas Wheat . Bud Long was unable to attend.

Welcome Guests: None. Doesn't anybody want to sit in on our little meetings? See if you might want to run for the ExComm next spring.

Minutes of the October 25 meeting, as published in the December 2006 SCAM, were approved unanimously.

Officer Reports:

Treasurer: Bud submitted the November Treasurer's Report via email. The report showed total funds of \$4052.01. The changes to the handling of the Mensa accounts discussed at the August meeting were put into effect on October 27.

Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

Old Business: There was no old business.

General Discussion: A possible spring party party, first brought up in the June meeting (My oh my, time really does fly!) was discussed further. George checked out possible venues such as Wickham park and the many various parks along A1A. He reported that the large pavilions at Wickham seemed like overkill and the small ones were too small. Paradise Park, on A1A in Indialantic has two pavilions which each seat 50. This seems to be a reasonable size. They are available for about \$55 for a day. Either of the two Saturdays in April, following Easter (April 14 and 21) seem to be a good time. Opinion was split on whether we should provide burgers and dogs or let the participants bring their own meat with the former favored. Also, should there be a charge or should the treasury pick it up. (formaer favored) It was resolved (no vote needed) to settle these issues at the next meeting and formally declare the picnic ON. Also, it would be nice if someone from the general membership would step up and volunteer to be chairperson and coordinate details. Members of the ExComm are prepared to assist, and will coordinate if required, but it really would be nice if we had a volunteer. Yes indeed, it really would be nice if we had a volunteer. It's really not a really big job like an RG, folks. Finally, it was speculated that we need a full fledged article touting the picnic because not enough people read the minutes. This was agreed upon.

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