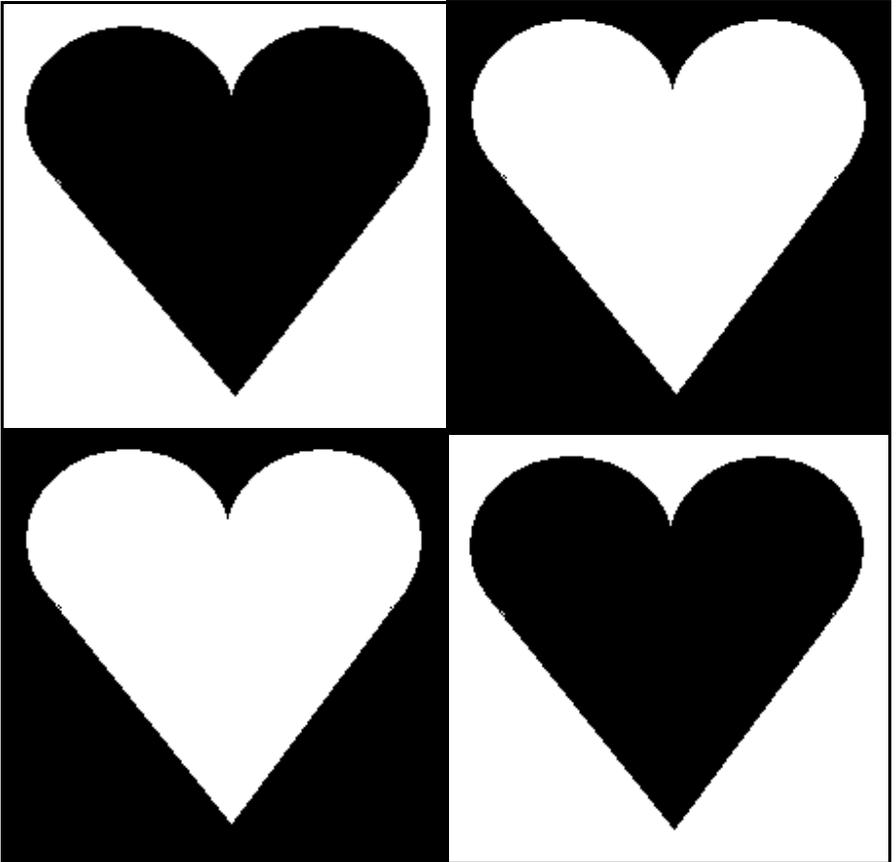


The

SCAM

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Happy Valentine's Day!





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

This month, I am departing from my normal policy of reserving my political views for my “*From the Village Idiot*” column. Be assured, this is *not* about the topics I usually address; rather, this is about Mensa politics. In reading this month’s RVC column, *The Tenth Story*, elsewhere in this issue, it appears to me that the National Office is promoting **e-subscriptions** (the newsletter sent as an attachment to a monthly e-mail message) to replace the print issue you now receive each month by virtue of being a SCAM member. Our RVC encourages this trend, as I understand it, for two reasons: the savings realized in not having to print and mail paper copies (as we do now), and less work for the group in producing and mailing this newsletter. I encourage everyone to read the RVC column this month.

I must respectfully disagree with our RVC. In order to make my position clear, I must explain our current state of affairs. You, the member, pay for this newsletter as part of your annual dues. Your dues are paid to the National Office in Texas, not our local group. The National Office, in turn, grants SCAM a “subsidy” for us to publish a monthly local newsletter for our members.

Lest anyone believe that I might be averse to current technology, let me point out that The SCAM is a computer-generated product. I receive submissions normally via e-mail, and I insert the contents into the newsletter using desktop publishing software. Once the newsletter is completed, I e-mail the finished product to the printer with relevant instructions. After the printing is done, our Circulation Coordinator picks up the finished product, sorts and mails the newsletters to

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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.

you. I also post a Web issue to our site for the perusal of anyone interested (you can find back issues there as well). That's about it.

How well has this worked? During my tenure as Editor, I have had surprisingly few complaints with regard to circulations issues, such as damaged, missing or late newsletters. While my experience indicates to me all is well, I encourage you to come forward at any time if you ever do have a problem receiving your newsletter.

I **stand opposed** to e-subscriptions and will not participate as long as I am Editor. Why? Let me enumerate my reasons.

1. Not all members have e-mail or use the Internet. Such members, by virtue of paying their dues are still entitled to *The SCAM*. *I believe to push e-subscriptions unduly discriminates against these valued members.*
2. Costs associated with printing and mailing are based on bulk quantities. Having fewer newsletters will almost certainly increase the price per issue.
3. Savings, if any, realized would not necessarily be passed on to the Space Coast Area Mensa. Moreover, it would definitely *not be passed on to us as members*. Think you dues will be reduced? If so, I have a bridge in my native New York City I'd like to sell you.

While I rely heavily on computer technology to produce *The SCAM* each month, I must insist that such use of technology be a benefit to all of us as members, not merely a convenience for the National Office.

Our current ExComm, as well as our prior ExComms, never have asked, much less pressured, me to look into e-subscriptions. In fact, all have always been supportive of my efforts as your Editor. Words cannot express how much I appreciate their support.

Overall, it has been my pleasure to serve as Editor, and I would very much like to continue to do so. However, as long as I am Editor, e-subscriptions to *The SCAM* will not happen. Should I ever be left with no other choice in this matter, *The SCAM* will be looking for another Editor. Let us hope this will never come to pass.

Michael Moakley

Three books from three favorite authors – how wonderful can that be? Dick Francis wrote his first book since his wife died 5 years ago, Tony Hillerman wrote his best Joe Leaphorn-Jim Chee book since Joe retired and Robert B. Parker brought back Hawk in the latest Spencer book.

Dick Francis brought Sid Halley's character back in Under Orders. On the Gold Cup day at the Cheltenham race track, there were three deaths, 2 men, 1 horse – two deaths were from natural causes and one was a clear-cut murder. Sid investigates the death of the jockey shot at the race track, the trainer for the horse the slain jockey would have ridden, and computerized Internet gambling. If his one good hand was not full enough, he has to figure out protecting his former father-in-law and his finance from a mad-man. Sid, of course, is fully up to the challenge and he comes to grip with his handicap – the arm he lost to his former career of steeplechase riding. Thanks, Mr. Francis, the book was great and we really appreciate your giving us another great racing story.

Tony Hillerman wrote one book called The Skinwalkers. In the Navajo lore, certain evil spirits can take on a variety of shapes – usually animal, frequently a wolf or coyote. The current book is entitled The Shape Shifter; that somewhat confused me since, being a big fan of the Hillerman stories, I know that "Shape Shifter" is another name for "Skinwalker". Apparently there is a slight difference between the two. The title might be a play on the concept for several characters. Joe Leaphorn has retired from the Navajo police force and is shifting into not being a policeman. Jim Chee and Bernadette Manuelito have married and are shifting into a comfortable life as a married couple in a small trailer. The "nefarious" character often made himself over into a new person so frequently that his real identity had been lost in the jungles of Vietnam in the 1960s. One bad character seems to have reformed into a good person. Working from a picture showing a rug previously thought to have been burned up in a fire but now hanging on the wall of a reclusive, self-made millionaire (and very mysterious), Joe is sent all the way back to his first investigation, an unsolved case of theft, the investigation was interrupted by a fatal fire. Joe finds himself caught up in events that, in the flash of gun, put him on the wrong side of the law but on

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Thanks to Art Belefant for writing for SCAM for over 14 years! May you enjoy your retirement, Art!

I think the idea of a picnic/party for members is a great idea, as presented by our esteemed CEO. Here's another suggestion for a venue, more centralized than that proposed, though I guess there aren't an abundance of members from Titusville.

The place is Kiwanis Island, on 520, one traffic light west of Wal-Mart on the same side of the street (north), easily accessible from A1A and SR3 (Courtenay Pkwy.) and Tropical Trail. A plus is that there's a covered pavilion there, which would be nice in case of rain. There are cooking facilities there. Another plus is the multiplicity of activities possible, including tennis, racquetball, basketball, softball, bring-your-own-boat pursuits, etc. We could even have "amateur hour" and a spelling bee at the pavilion (auditory equipment available). I have no idea what the fee would be.

-- Joyce Megginson Kircher

(Continued from page 5)

the right side of justice, and he had to walk a fine line to keep from involving his friends, Jim and Bernie Chee but he also felt a need to let them know what happened...and what a wild ride it was.

The Hawk is back and Spencer needed him. Spencer is faced with a blast from the past as well as the others had been. Spencer had helped a street girl, (one might think it was ironic) by putting her into the world of escort service. When she pops up in Spencer's office, she has changed so much, Spencer does not recognize her – she is a beautiful, poised woman who just happens to be the madam of a very high-class house of prostitution in Boston. She looks to Spencer to be her knight one more time. The investigation into the troubles she is experiencing from someone who appears to be trying to put her out of business. Spencer is disappointed to learn that, not only did April, the madam, knew who was causing her problems, she had instigated the problems. Spencer, uncharacteristically even wears a bullet-proof vest, but April will never have to be rescued again.

I know I'm lucky to have a garage. Many years I spent dashing from the car to an apartment door, groceries perched precariously in arms, during some deluge or other. But with age and comfort, I got soft. And now it's easy for me to complain about stuff like bikes not being nestled properly in the northeast-southwest orientation.

My current garage actually has enough room to park two vehicles, assorted bicycles, and lawn equipment - though seldom without a struggle.

Not good enough! When life is kind, we get greedy. So, I proclaimed one weekend, the garage should be CLEAN, NEAT, and ORGANIZED.

Stop laughing. That wasn't the punch line.

Anyway, there is this little law of universal physics (and I promise this will tie in later) called "The Law of Entropy." For those of you who have better things to do than study physics in your spare time, the Law of Entropy says that the universe constantly approaches a state of total disorder. Like a giant child's bedroom, or government.

And nowhere is the law of entropy more true than in a garage.

So, right from the start, I was pretty much bucking the laws of nature and the universe. This became apparent almost immediately, when I backed out the cars and attempted to sweep. Irritated at this bold display of hubris, Mother Nature kicked up a stiff breeze, and at the end of the hour, more leaves were inside the garage than when I started.

No matter. Modern science has blessed me with a bold invention: the leaf blower. And thus all other laws, universal or not, were superseded by the law of eye protection.

It's an interesting truism that once a garage floor has been divested of its protective layer of filth, one tends to notice all manner of oil and grease stains, and sometimes when one is very, very stupid, one decides that concrete would look better without them.

This required the purchase of vile chemicals and epoxy paint, complete with 17 pages of instructions, and the rental of some strange piece of equipment that weighed more than I do.

Right there in the paint department, I realized that if I was going to paint the garage floor, the garage walls really needed

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some attention, too. And soon thereafter I discovered that if one is foolhardy enough to paint garage walls, she will surely notice that the ceiling looks like hell, as well.

Hence, I found myself with enough chemicals, paints, and supplies to require storage. But, after all, how much trouble could it be to install workshop cabinets?

Due to the copious amount of time it takes to assemble cabinets from a “kit” - a pile of boards and generous pile of little metal doo-dads (but no instructions) - one ends up spending some long-awaited quality time with the A/C furnace. Which one may never have noticed before, leaks, and has corroded not only its central nervous system, but also a goodly portion of drywall.

Drywall can be inconvenient to install, unless one has lots of elbowroom. Which, in this case, meant that this would probably be a good time to install wooden shelves against the entire southern wall of the garage - to get stuff up off of the floor and out of the way, and looking all organized. Preferably in matching labeled boxes. (Where’s a psychotherapist when you need one?)

The most pressing issue associated with installing several thousand linear feet of shelving is whether to paint it the wall color, the floor color, or the trim color. The answer is usually: whichever you have run out of.

Proud of my handiwork so far, I realized that there were still half a dozen odd things that didn’t fit on any of the shelves, nor in any of the cabinets.

This called for the installation of additional wire shelving, in a myriad of lengths and widths for maximum confusion purposes. Next, I figured I should probably spackle the holes which resulted from the improper initial placement of abovementioned wire shelves.

The last holdout: the ladder. For most efficient use of space, I decided it should be mounted with pulleys and ropes, and snuggled neatly out of the way, against the ceiling. I also discovered at length, that the space beneath a hung ladder should only be occupied by things that don’t accept bond-o or stitches.

Finally, I applied the floor paint in a simple 72-step process, which included such highlights as acid etching, and a fun little asphyxiation exercise that actually assisted the process by rendering me incapable of fleeing the scene.

And that was it. Except for hanging the dangly “you’re in far enough” car-parking indicators (in this case, yellow tennis balls),

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The Long of It:

Any session of play with the SCRABBLE® Brand Crossword Game will probably consist of at least a few of the 101 two-letter words. There is room on the playing board for fifteen-letter words, and there are 3,157 of them (from ABSORBABILITIES to ZOOGEOGRAPHICAL), but I have never played a word this long or even seen one played. However, one can dream...

Suppose the top row of the board looks like this (with hyphens for empty squares): ---HEN-UTA-ON-. (UTA: any of a genus of large lizards.) If the seven letters on your rack happen to be BEOPXYZ, you can make the word OXYPHENBUTAZONE. (*The Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary* does not define words this long; it can be looked up elsewhere, but it is not necessary to know the definition of a word in order to play it.)

Now for the scoring: A, E, N, O, T, and U are worth one point apiece; B and P are worth three points apiece; H and Y are worth four points apiece; X is worth eight points; and Z is worth ten points. P and Z are on double letter score squares, the word just covered three triple word score squares, and all seven letters on your rack were used, so the play is worth $(1 + 8 + 4 + 2 \times 3 + 4 + 1 + 1 + 3 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 2 \times 10 + 1 + 1 + 1) \times 3 \times 3 \times 3 + 50 = 1508$ points. Although such a play would take much setting up, this single play is more than the record set on October 12, 2006 for most total points in a game.

It's even possible that MISSION could already be on the board twice -- in the first and last columns so that the first O and last E in OXYPHENBUTAZONE form OMISSION and EMISSION respectively. M = 3 points and S = 1 point and triple word score: 60 more points.

But that's just greedy.

Next month: *Fabrics of the Cosmos*

EDITOR'S NOTE: In running last month's column, "*The Short of It*", I call attention to an error that appeared in the middle of the second paragraph. It reads, "An I understand the Q or an A..." It should read, "An I under the Q or an A..." The error is mine, and not that of the author. I apologize for any resultant confusion or inconvenience to the reader.

Very few investors make money in the stock market. Wall Street will deny this, of course, but look at where your account is today compared with what you had at the beginning of 2000. Don't count what you have added during that time or interest income. Most folks are still running a loss.

Your broker, if you are unlucky enough to have one, will assure you that the market always comes back and you are in for the long haul. So don't worry, be happy. Is your name Alfred E Newman? If you were one of the few (about 1%) who had a broker or financial planner that actually knew how to protect your money you would not have lost a huge portion of your portfolio from 2000 to 2003. The Wall Street mavens do not teach their brokers the simplest technique for account protection. And they never will.

So, you have to learn to protect yourself! It is a lot easier than you think and most brokers are not even aware of it. Even if they were their company would not allow them to implement it. Let's suppose you have been reading my column for the past few years and I showed how to know when the stock market was a buy. The buy signal was April 2003 and you are still long today. About 80% of 401K portfolios have less than \$50,000 so here is how to set up this money management technique.

It was time to buy. Divide the portfolio into 10 equal parts. Select 10 mutual funds and/or exchange traded funds (ETFs) that have quit going down and are now going up and buy these. This doesn't have to be done all in one day. Spread it out over the next 2 or 3 months as good equities present themselves. Here is the key. Don't lose money. Ha, ha, you say. Place a 10% stop loss order on each fund that was purchased and as each fund advances raise the stop every month. The investor has 10 separate positions with a 10% risk on each one. If the selection of the fund was poor and it goes down instead of up the loss is one percent (1%) of the total portfolio.

The investor has been smart enough to diversify into several sectors so the chance of losing in all 10 positions is very small. Do not buy individual stocks. Few investors are capable of choosing company stocks. Let the mutual fund manager do that. Buying no load mutual funds there is no commission and even smaller fees in exchange traded funds. As stops are hit find other good equi-

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SCAM Calendar of Events for February 2007

24th - 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

Vito Jimenez

Welcome to SCAM and Mensa

Sarah Okeson

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

<i>4th</i>	Dana Stetser	<i>13th</i>	Craig Reynolds
<i>7th</i>	Heather Howard	<i>14th</i>	Wynn Rostek
<i>7th</i>	Robert Stubbe	<i>17th</i>	Robert Lipton
<i>11th</i>	Michael Moakley		

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

ties that are going up. When the market turns down you will be in cash as you will have been stopped out of all positions with nice profits.

Brokers don't know any more that you do (and I'm not kidding) so you pick the no load funds and ETFs you like. This simple strategy will spread risk, prevent large initial losses and prevent giving back profits as they are made.

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.

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a few throw pillows, and an inspirational piece of abstract art to cover the big hole that the ladder made when it fell off of its pulley system.

See, and it only took three months!

I'd carved out a niche of perfect order in my garage, thus pushing the Law of Entropy back 20 feet - into my house.

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I wish I were king. King George of the United States. Has kind of a nice ring to it, don't you think? If I were the King of the United States, I could change some things that really irk me; things that really need to be corrected to make this a better world to live in. And, as king, I could just decree these things to happen and they would! No pesky things like voting and constitutionality and partisan politics to worry about. It would just be "Off with his head!" and -- poof! -- off comes the head.

Anyhow, here are some things that need to be put right:

1. Daylight Savings Time - Now, I can't say for sure one way or another whether Daylight Savings Time really saves energy or makes it safer for schoolkids, but I can say with some degree of self-assurance that neither the cows nor the chickens care one whit whether we diddle the time an hour or not. It is a fact that twice a year I must race around frantically resetting electronic devices, all of which seem to come equipped with clocks these days. To say nothing of the miscellaneous alarm clocks and watches all over the house and the clocks in the cars. Nope. Not worth it. When I'm King, we split the difference one time and leave it there forever.

2. New Commercial Construction - The land is cleared, there are piles of "construction stuff" laying all over, maybe even a few itinerant laborers loitering about. And signs telling me who the electrical contractor is, the plumber, the financial institution backing the endeavor, the building contractor, construction permits. Everything except the one critical piece of information that everyone wants to know: What's coming here? Now, sometimes you'll get the courtesy of a "Myron's Discount Parakeet Shoe Store, Coming Soon!" But not too often. When I'm King, the first thing -- the VERY FIRST THING -- that must be displayed on the site of a new business venture is the identification of what is being erected. I mean, it's important to know whether it's just another chiropractor's office (in which case, it can be easily dismissed) or if it's the long-awaited arrival of the first franchise Bubba's Cholesterol Emporium in the county, in which case it is crucial to know in advance so that an effective plan of attack may be formulated: Do you join the rush that lines up early on opening day, or do you join the rush that arrives a few days later to avoid the opening day rush, or do you join the rush that patiently waits

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for the opening day avoidance rush to subside? These are not simple decisions. Early warning is a critical advantage.

3. Staggered TV Commercials - I recognize the need for advertising on TV. It's what makes the world go 'round. So, I don't decry the sponsor's right to inflict their ads upon us. What I do object to; however, is that all the ads come at the same time! You're in the middle of watching the semi-final match of the World Telephone Book Balancing competition between traditional rivals Namibia and Turkmenistan when suddenly there's an injury time-out for the Namibian team's left forward power elocutionist to dress a severe paper cut. Of course, they cut to commercial. So, you figure it's going to be a couple of minutes, why not switch channels and find out what's shakin' on your favorite soap: "*As The World Turns All My Passionate Bold & Beautiful Children In General Hospital Through The Days Of Our Lives Towards The Guiding Light.*" And wouldn't you know... They're running a commercial too. Oh, travesty of justice! Is nothing fair in this world? What's a body to do? Thus, when I am King of the good ol' USA, it will be illegal, immoral, and just plain rude to run a commercial when the other fellow's having his. You'll just have to wait for an open slot in the line-up to peddle your wares.

4. Long Line of Cars at the Left Turn Signal - So, the light turns green and the first car starts up. Then the accordion effect takes over as each succeeding car's driver wakes up and begins the exodus from the left turn sojourn. By the time it gets to you at the back of the pack, the light has changed and you're relegated to another round of doldrums. Now, in this age of electronic marvels, how hard could it be to come up with a simple device that attaches to the accelerator which detects the change of status in the left turn signal and automatically gooses each car simultaneously so that you have a nice, tightly knit parade making the left turn instead of a stream of cars that more resemble a Slinky®? Would save gas as well as eliminate pique.

5. Grandma's Teacups - Don't look so perplexed. You know *exactly* what I'm talking about. It's those dainty, little teacups that have a handle that you can't get your finger through. You end up pinching the handle between thumb and forefinger, struggling mightily not to allow the whole shebang to rotate

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A Mensan in the family?

Are you the Mensan in your family? Or, is your spouse, child, parent or sibling the Mensan in your household? Are two or more (maybe all) in your household Mensans? If any of these apply, The SCAM is soliciting an article from *you*. All members of SCAM or family members are invited to respond. What are your impressions and experiences?

My Summer Vacation:

PEEVES

Continued

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around this delightful fulcrum, and pouring the contents of the cup (usually boiling hot tea) into your lap. Sure, they're pretty with their hand-painted, pastel, bucolic scenes. But they're totally impractical. Under King George's reign, only mugs allowed. Big 'uns. With handles large enough to put all four fingers through for a good, tight grip. Besides, there'd be more space to put an even bigger hand-painted, bucolic scene on it. Or something.

Anyway, I believe these simple and practical improvements in our overly-complex lives would make great strides toward the goal of world peace. All it would take is to elect me king. I hope I can count on your vote.

**SPACE
AVAILABLE
INQUIRE WITHIN...**

Several of you have “stepped up” and answered the call for new material to be published in *The SCAM*. We appreciate that, and urge you to keep your contributions coming. For those of you who have not yet done so, this is a reminder that there’s still plenty of room...

To our readers, you may have noticed there are different topics than before as we publish new columns. Why not add to the variety of topics by writing that column you’ve always wanted to write?

We invite just about any topic. For those among us who are poets or writers of fiction, *The SCAM* also has plenty of space. Contributions for cover art are also welcome.

Let it never be said that the Village Idiot cannot admit his mistakes! Yes, it happened. In the April 2004 issue of *The SCAM*, (although I did not come out and state it) in my column entitled “In Defense of an Institution?” I implied that legalizing gay marriage would have no effect on the “traditional” marriage.

Before explaining my error, let’s review some statements I made in that article: “Banning gays from marriage would not protect the ‘traditional marriage’”. “Such a proposed constitutional amendment would never pass.” Finally, “This was a junk issue to divide working class voters in order to facilitate the ongoing rape of the working American.” Now, as then, I stand behind those statements.

I stated in the April 2004 column that I did not take a stand on the issue. That was true then, but not now. I now go on record as *supporting* the right of gays to marry. My reasons for this “change of heart” will become readily apparent as I explain my error.

Unless otherwise specified here, the term, “marriage” means the traditional man-and-woman relationship. Back in April 2004, I approached the issue with the view that the success of one relationship is not dependent on the fate of any other (Unless the latter involves “exes” or family members of the former). I saw then, as now, that a marriage lives or dies based on the actions of its partners. What I failed to consider is that marriage is a *legal* relationship. Like all legal relationships, marriages are governed by many (and sometimes conflicting) laws.

“Marriage” is one of several terms that are included in what is known as “domestic relations” (or words to that effect, depending on jurisdiction). “Domestic relations” stands out from other areas of the law because of the absence of specific parameters governing them. Judicial rulings in this area are based on “the best interests of the parties” (or of the children) in accordance with the values and convictions of the judge. The best term to describe this is “ambiguity”. To my knowledge, the only exception to this is child support enforcement, as this was essential to selling “welfare reform” in the 1990s.

To add to this mess is the sudden shift in social values we have experienced over the last 50 years. This was not one single shift to which we had time to adjust; rather, it was a partial shift

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followed by several other unofficial partial shifts largely based on the self-interests of the dominant partner of a given relationship. This is my understanding of how these events transpired.

When I was growing up, Dad was the breadwinner, Mom stayed at home to “keep house” and, of course, to deal with my siblings and me. Although I knew of some “working mothers”, families such as mine were presented as the norm.

Throughout my adolescence, my vocabulary seemed to expand by leaps and bounds. Added, of course, was the term, “male chauvinistic pig” (yes, I had to *ask* what that meant) that was applied to virtually all males. The short skirts I was beginning to admire were suddenly replaced by long, dark, dreary skirts known as Maxis (or Midis, depending on whether they touched the feet). The (I thought) seductive smile was replaced by the perpetual angry scowl. Such was my introduction to Women’s Liberation. On to young adulthood...!

The issue of the day was the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (Although an issue for over 80 years, I am referring to its *reintroduction* in the 1970s). Initially supported by feminists, the ERA proposal had considerable female support, but was slow to catch on with the men. ERA died some years later when it lost support among women. Yes, women proposed and killed the ERA proposal. One reason for this surfaced in the late 1970s when Congress, seeing men and women as equals toyed with the idea that women, as well as men, should be required to register for the draft. It seems this was one factor in sounding the call for “traditional values” (remember the Moral Majority?).

In the meantime, women did attain the status of equality in some areas, such as employment, credit, and property ownership. Divorces in many states, notably those in the “Bible Belt”, became “no-fault,” better described as “divorce-on-demand”. While this phase of the ERA push was dying, different women I knew, when asked their stand on ERA, the reply was nearly always, “I believe in equal pay for equal work, but we don’t want equality with men.” With the legal ambiguity of domestic relations, we are now brought to conflicting values, driven more by self-interest than by any true principles or values.

In marriage, to my knowledge, none ever truly exist as a relationship of equals. Like all relationships without specific rules of conduct, the dominant partner is the one who has the least to lose (or the most to gain) in the event of failure. For example, the per-

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son likely to be forced to pay alimony (“spousal support” is the PC term) in the event of a divorce would have more to lose, assuming all other factors to be equal, than the mate...care to guess who’s in charge here?

Currently, this state of affairs exists because there is virtually no guidance as to sex roles nor is there a true state of equality. Are men and women really equal, or do they have specific sex roles? If the latter, what are those roles? Your guess is as good as mine. Now, what happens if gays “marry”? No sex roles to debate about here, since both partners are of the same sex. From the standpoint of gender, they *must* be considered equals.

If there exists a true “*definition-of-marriage*” issue, it would be this -- If we allow gays to marry, men would no longer be able to subjugate women, and no longer would women be able to dominate men, at least not in a legally enforceable manner. It follows, then, only the bullies in the relationships would stand to lose if gays were able to legally marry. Hence, we have the shrill conservative opposition. As for me, I believe we all should be regarded as equal under the law. So, indeed, gays should have the right to marry. The best of us, straight or gay, only stand to benefit as a result. The only losers will be the bullies – and that’s certainly okay by me.

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*.

By the time you receive this, the 2007 Smarti Gras Regional Gathering in Orlando will be a happy memory, and it will be almost

time for the 2007 Valentime Regional Gathering in Destin. I hope we are seeing each other at least one of those events, if not both.

If you have never attended an RG, this might be the year to give it a try! And then Tampa Bay Mensa's RG will be Memorial Day weekend.

I attended my very first RG one month after I became a member, and I have been a regular attendee ever since. If I go too many months without the camaraderie of an RG, I feel a kind of withdrawal. What do I miss? Games? Speakers? Hospitality? Everything! But especially the conversation and seeing old friends, as well as the opportunity to make new friends from everywhere.

Have you ever thought about receiving your local group newsletter by e-mail rather than by snail mail? Many groups are considering offering that as an option. There are a lot of reasons this would be a good thing. First, it would save your local group money on the printing and mailing. Second, it would save a tree or two. Third, it would ease the burden of stress on those who ready the newsletter for mailing. And finally, you don't run the risk of your newsletter being either delayed or completely lost in the mail. (I honestly received a post office envelope containing a torn cover of the Gainesville group's newsletter from November. That was all - just a piece of the cover, which had my address on it. I received it in January!) So if your local group is thinking of offering the option of receiving your newsletters via e-mail, if you are internet savvy, perhaps it is time to consider it. And if there is something in it that you really do want printed, you can print it out at home. I know that I will be opting to save my share of trees this way!

I was surprised to learn that many members do not take advantage of the many things available on the national website (us.mensa.org). If you haven't been there recently, perhaps you should check it out. I admit that I log in at least once a day, if only to the games page - love the Sudoku and the jigsaw puzzle!

But you can keep track of what the AMC is doing, as first the agenda for upcoming AMC meetings are posted, and then after the meeting the minutes are posted. You can enter into all kinds of verbal exchanges on the Mensa Discussion Forums. You can find con-

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The ExComm met at the home of George Patterson on Wednesday, January 3, 2007. Called to order at 5:52 pm by LocSec George Patterson.

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

Welcome Guests: None.

Minutes of the December 6 meeting, as published in the January 2007 SCAM, were approved unanimously.

Officer Reports:

LocSec: George reported that the pavilion at Paradise park was reserved for the April 21 picnic.

Treasurer: Bud submitted the December Treasurer's Report. The report showed total funds of \$3898.60. Major expenditures for the month were associated with the SCAM newsletter, and included the annual bulk mailing permit.

Testing: Helen Lee Moore (proctor coordinator) reported by phone that a testing session was scheduled for December, but no one appeared.

Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

Old Business: There was no old business.

New Business: There was no new business.

The move to adjourn was passed by unanimous vote at 5:56 pm,

The next meeting of the ExComm is scheduled for Wednesday, **February 7, at 5:30 pm** at **George Patterson's** house, 301 Sand Pine Road, Indialantic. (321-777-3721)

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tact information for most Mensa members around the country in the Mensa Member Directory. The list goes on - why not take some time to explore YOUR national website?

Happy Valentine's Day!

Maggie Truelove

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